RELIGIONS OF BIBLE LANDS

PROF. D. S. MARGOLIOUTH



CHRISTIAN STUDY MANUALS





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A. C. ARMSTRONG AND SON

3 AND 5 WEST EIGHTEENTH STREET

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PREFACE

Of works dealing with Comparative Religion the first place for learning, acuteness, and suggestiveness is probably to be assigned to J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough;* it is indeed a grammar of the subject, containing paradigms and categories to which it is ordinarily easy to refer religious practices and doctrines. The religions to which the following sketches refer are treated in the classical works of Tiele and De La Saussaye; in the former they are described by one who was an expert in all, in the latter by a series of specialists: the *History of Religion* by Dr. Allan Menzies is on a smaller scale, but covers the same ground as these great classics. Of works dealing especially with the Religion of the Semites the unfinished *Lectures* of the lamented Robertson Smith are the best representative; much of the matter has still to be collected from the notes by which various collections of inscriptions have been elucidated; except, indeed, in the case of the Assyrian Religion, on

which there are many treatises, the latest in English being probably that by Mr. L. W. King, whose other works also provide valuable material. A text and translation of the chief Babylonian Myths and Epics form the latest volume of the *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*. For the Religion of Egypt the scholarly and brilliant treatises of E. W. Budge are most helpful; portions of the subject are dealt with by Maspero in his Mythological Essays, and in the treatises of Brugsch, Wiedemann, and von Strauss und Torney. For the Religion of Persia the *History of the Parsis*, by D. F. Karaka, as the work of a believer, is peculiarly instructive; otherwise the material contained in the contributions of Darmsteter, Mills and West to the *Sacred Books of the East* is probably the best available.

The nature of these Manuals scarcely permits of constant references to authorities. I hope, however, that there is no statement below for which some good authority could not be cited, though, where there is a question of weighing probabilities, the writer has had to trust his own judgment.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

1. Bible Lands.—By Bible Lands we mean countries in which considerable portions of the Old Testament history were enacted, or whose inhabitants exercised considerable influence on the Israelitish people.

The study of the religions dominant in these countries is of importance for the right understanding of those parts of the Old Testament in which foreign practices are condemned, and also for the better comprehension of the ceremonies permitted or encouraged in the Biblical books. In a system which assumed an attitude of fierce hostility towards other systems attention is necessarily directed to what was similar and what was dissimilar in their respective institutions.

According to the Biblical narrative the founder of the Israelites came from a place probably in Mesopotamia. He and his descendants for two generations lived in the nomad state in Palestine, occasionally visiting other countries. Their descendants grew into a nation in the Egyptian Delta, whence they returned and seized the land of Canaan, expelling the inhabi-

tants from their cities. This process, which was not without vicissitudes, culminated in their supremacy on both sides of Jordan, and over a great variety of States. After many centuries they were transplanted by kings of Assyria and Babylonia to the east of the Euphrates, whence a portion of the nation was restored to Palestine by Persian kings. The latest name mentioned in the Old Testament is that of a contemporary of Alexander the Great.

Bible Lands are therefore chiefly the lands either comprised in or adjacent to Canaan. Phœnicia, Philistia and Syria were sufficiently famous to be mentioned by the classics of the West; many more of the nations or States mentioned in the Old Testament as near neighbours of the Israelites receive notice in Assyrian monuments, and some in yet older Egyptian documents. Of the seven nations whom the Israelites claimed more especially to have displaced, one, the Hittites, played a prominent part in ancient history.

Although the sentiments cherished by the Israelites towards the races that they found established in Canaan on their return thither were fiercely hostile, the evidence of language might prove them to be their kin. Whatever may be the origin of the name Abraham, his sons and grandsons have Semitic names. The name by which the nation contrasted itself with foreigners, the *Hebrews*, has an obvious Semitic etymology; like Peræans, it means the people from the opposite bank or shore. Equally Semitic is the name of their bitter enemies the *Philistines;* their

collective appellation means the *wanderers* or *exiles*, a word which is familiar in one of the South Semitic dialects, and the sense of which was still known when the Septuagint translation of the Bible was made. The language of Canaan was also the language of the *Phœnicians*, with whom the Israelites had relations, sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile, and of *Moab*, which incurred the fierce hatred of Israelite legislators. Of the names of places current in Palestine before the Israelitish immigration there are but few which must be interpreted from non-Semitic sources. Of the names recorded in the Book of Joshua the greater number are without doubt Semitic appellations.

Being then so closely akin to the Canaanites, the Chosen Race had a natural sympathy with the religions which they found in vogue, and, as we learn from the Bible, were ever ready to return to them.

The further back the Aramaic language is traced the closer is its resemblance to the idiom of the Canaanites. The Bible represents the Syrians as cousins of the Israelites, and brings them into close and on the whole friendly relations with the latter at many periods. The Syrian language became the second mother-tongue of the Jews at the time of the exile, and a variety of it is still the vernacular of some of the Jewish communities in the East. It is even possible that during the time of Israelitish independence there were communities whose native language was Syriac rather than Canaanitish. Hence

Syria may be treated as a Bible Land without question.

The oldest monuments of the Semitic language are in Assyrian, of which Babylonian is a dialect. Repeated excavations have enabled scholars to trace the existence of this idiom to a period that might be regarded as fabulous. Largely mixed with a foreign vocabulary and with the characteristic Semitic sounds softened and confused, and defaced by a system of writing in which the root-system is obliterated, it is nevertheless a branch of the Semitic stock. The nations who employed it constituted a great world-power—one whose influence was felt by the Canaanites long before and also long after the Israelitish immigration, and the names of whose gods were in consequence familiar to the Israelitish prophets. Yet the title Bible Land seems scarcely appropriate to a country in which the greater part of the Israelitish race disappeared from history, and which the restored community abandoned, taking with them no feeling but abhorrence.

To the land of Egypt there are many allusions in the Old Testament, and some of the writers display a familiar acquaintance with Egyptian customs. Allusions to Egyptian religions seem to be intentionally avoided, and detestation of Egypt was for a long time a leading motive in Israelitish policy. Towards the end of the history of independent Israel this feeling vanished, and Egypt became the home of many Jewish exiles from the time of Jeremiah,

becoming at a much later time the place where Israelitish ideas mingled with and became modified by the discoveries of the Greeks. After Canaan Egypt is the land which affects Biblical history most.

The Persian Empire is associated with the restoration of the national existence of the Jews, and many of the episodes of the later Biblical history passed in Persian cities. To the religion of the Persians the Jews are not disinclined to acknowledge certain obligations, and to the similarity of their religious beliefs the latter probably owed the special favour with which they were treated by the former. Liberal treatment by the ruling Power has almost invariably had the effect of rendering the Israelites expansive and ready to adopt ideas unconnected or even at variance with their own religious system. Whereas, therefore, the cruelties which they associated with the names of Egypt at the commencement of their history and of Babylon at the end of it rendered them averse to the practices of these countries, the benefit which they had derived from Persia caused them to regard the cult of that country with toleration. The difficulties of dating the documents of the Israelites render the detection of borrowings from Persia peculiarly difficult. But in regarding Persia as a Bible Land for our present purpose we are clearly justified.

2. Their "Articles of Religion".—The drawing up of articles of religion is invariably a late process; beliefs and practices exist long before it occurs to any

one to codify the former or to analyse the latter. Thus when we learn that the Jewish articles of faith are 613, we may infer that they were not drawn up till the Jews had learned to count by letters, that number standing clearly in some relation to the numerical value of the Jewish name for the law; and counting by letters was learned by them from the Greeks. These articles then were not drawn up till many centuries after the national religion had been practised. In the case of the religions with which we are dealing we possess no such handbooks; we must, therefore, be on our guard against trying to know more than the worshippers knew about their cults. Most of all we must remember that the distinction between the real and the imaginary, between truth and falsehood, is one that belongs to a late period of human progress; and one which is differently appreciated by different minds even in civilised times. Hence in drawing up an account of an ancient religion we must expect to find many contradictory propositions.

The philosopher Nietzsche has with great justice compared the savage consciousness to the dreaming state: sensations are ascribed to imaginary causes, and in the assignment of those causes there are no laws of chronology, nor of space, nor even of identity; a dead man can act as well as a living one; even between the subject and the object there is no clear line of demarcation. The gods may be thought of sometimes as mortal, sometimes as immortal; as

many, and as one ; as passionless, and as passionate ; when man has begun to reflect he will discover an inconsistency between these epithets, but while he is still in the dream state he is unconscious of it.

When,however, reflection has commenced, theology begins to take the place of religion. This means that the creations of dreamland are subjected to the categories by which experiences of the waking state are interpreted. Systems so evolved often give rise to official religions, but do not greatly affect the mass of those who have neither time nor inclination for abstract thought. Hence the speculations of priests are ordinarily regarded as an unsafe source for the study of a nation's religion. The comparison of the practice of different communities is thought to be a safer guide both to the original purpose of a practice and to the instinct which fostered it. This does not prevent the possibility of the religion of a race developing in one direction rather than another, but it is rare that national religions can with justice be declared to be pervaded by some distinct dogma. On the other hand, the reasons for practices are perpetually shifting, and while we are not justified in attributing to those who maintain them at any particular time the most enlightened of current explanations, we are also not entitled to attribute to them the naïve reason which originally gave rise to the practice. Hence a description of a religion, so long as it is confined to names and customs, may well be accurate ; when it exceeds those regions, it runs the

risk of ascribing to a community what is the property of certain individuals.

3. Our Method therefore will be to collect and explain the chief names which the records of these religions furnish us. Familiarly employed by the worshippers, they were associated with certain ideas ; frequently we can place ourselves in the position of the worshippers, and see things through their eyes. Even where the records are exceedingly imperfect, we have rarely (for this purpose) to deplore much more than the loss of names ; the real has a history, and an endless series of facts attaching to it : the characters of fiction have no ancestry and no contemporaries.

CHAPTER II.

SEMITIC RELIGIONS.

1. Sources.—The original home of the Semites appears to have been Arabia, whence by a series of migrations they spread into Assyria, Syria and Palestine. One branch of the Palestinian family, the Phœnicians, sent colonies over the whole coast of the Mediterranean. So far as we can trace the history of the Semites by the aid of comparative grammar, before the first of these migrations they had already acquired a fair degree of civilisation. The names for the domestic relationships and for some political institutions are common to the whole Semitic family; so also are the names for some of the objects and processes which enable men to live in comfort. But religions are ordinarily conservative, and to understand some rites and practices we have to go back in thought beyond the documents which we possess. Vestiges are to be found of a state of savagery which the Semites, ere the first migration, would seem to have outgrown.

The physical features of Arabia caused its inhabitants from early times to be divided into nomad communities and settled communities. The fertile

regions developed a luxurious town-life, whereas the desert retained its charm for the Bedouin. Probably the ranks of each of these divisions were constantly recruited from those of the other. The need for more means of subsistence drove the increasing population to make fresh *directions*, as the Arabs call nations; and for enterprises of the sort which required numbers the members of many tribes would unite.

We should naturally seek the oldest Semitic religion in Arabia, and among the Bedouins. Their religions, however, were abolished by Mohammed and his successors, and we know little about them beyond what the Arabic antiquarians thought fit to preserve. These authors lived for the most part some generations after the abolition of the old worships, with which many of them had little sympathy. Their information is, therefore, meagre, and has ordinarily to be received with caution.

Of the ancient States that occupied the fertile portions of Arabia many monuments have been discovered; some that can be dated go back to the eighth century B.C., and it is probable that many are far earlier. They are not exclusively religious in character, but for the most part give some information that throws light on the cults that prevailed. Many are tablets which either record gifts to the gods or commemorate answers to prayers.

For the religions of the Syrian States we possess documents of about the same age as the earliest

that can be dated of the last named. They are inscriptions composed by vassals of the Assyrian kings, the very names of whose States would without these inscriptions be unknown. Occasional monuments are preserved from the succeeding centuries, till about the time of the Christian era they become common, and continue so till about the break-up of paganism.

For about the same period we possess a series of monuments in dialects of the Phœnician language, the greater number being from the neighbourhood of Carthage, and being worded in precisely the same style, save for the difference in the names of the persons who caused them to be written. One inscription of importance is provided by Israel's near neighbour Moab.

Earlier than all these are the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, a series of letters addressed by persons resident in Palestine to residents in Egypt; they were composed in the fifteenth century B.C. Their contents, which are often obscure, are chiefly political; but they contain precious information about the prevalent religions also.

Of all the Semitic countries the only one which has left a religious pagan literature is Assyria. A large collection of texts still exists in the Assyrian language, not unfrequently translated from the original Sumerian or Accadian, consisting of epics, theogonies, psalms and prayers. From these texts we obtain the same sort of information concerning

the Assyrian worship as we get from Greek and Indian authors about the ideas and practices of their respective countries. Whereas the greater number of Semitic deities are for us mere names, those of Assyria have some sort of history and character.

Besides these monuments the Bible is itself a source of information about the religions of Bible Lands. It is true the Israelites were forbidden to mention the gods of their neighbours (Exodus xxiii. 13); and acquaintance with the religious practices of the "idolaters" was regarded by the pious as in itself a danger. Copyists of the Old Testament, where the name "god" was given to an idol, were in the habit of altering it to "horror" or "abomination". With the Prophets a foreign religion was not a subject for sympathetic study but for mockery and detestation. Still the rule of Exodus was not consistently carried out. Numerous places were called after pagan deities (*e.g.*, Beth-Shemesh, Beth-Dagon, Beth-Lehem, Beth-Anoth, Beth-Chanan, Anathoth, Ashteroth Karnaim), and though some of these were altered by pious monotheists, the greater number retained their old names. Moreover, by the side of the stern monotheists of whom Moses is the type there were always persons who shared the tolerance of Aaron. One of the Judges (xi. 24) went so far as to admit that the Moabites got their country from Chemosh just as the Israelites got theirs from Jehovah. Another text implies that sacrifices to

the former deity were effectual (2 Kings iii. 27). Even Abraham is made to identify the deity of Melchizedek, King of Salem, with his own (Gen. xiv. 22). Such political operations as treaties, alliances, and even truces, could not be made binding without the witness of gods, and on such occasions the existence of foreign deities had to be recognised. Visitors, whose presence was not discouraged by the Israelites, whether they came for commerce or for the performance of definite services, were sure to let something be known of the religion which they followed at home. Hence the Biblical legislation and remonstrance, even where they condemn foreign practices most severely, sometimes manifest some acquaintance with their externals. Bible statements as to the localities of particular cults are not unfrequently confirmed by the evidence of monuments. With more than the externals of foreign religions it is not concerned.

Finally, some of the classical (Greek and Roman) writers were interested in foreign religions, and either wrote about them themselves, or encouraged the production of translations from original treatises bearing on the subject. Lucian (*ob. circ.* 180 A.D., himself a Syrian from Samosata) has left a treatise on the Syrian goddess. A portion of a work on Phœnician religion by Sakkun-yathan ("the gift of Sakkun") was translated by Philo of Byblus, and is preserved by Eusebius. Doubts concerning the Phœnician origin of this work have been dispelled by the fact

that the sense of both parts of the author's name, till recent times unknown, has been ascertained owing to fresh finds of inscriptions in the Phœnician language. Greek historians and geographers occasionally record observations which the study of inscriptions tends to confirm. They are of course free from the animus which is everywhere apparent in the accounts given by Israelites of these matters.

2. Class.—The Semitic religions belong to the class called Polytheism. Respect was paid to a variety of objects, real or imaginary, supposed to be possessed of the will and the power to help or hinder men's designs. *Real* objects thus respected might be either *fetishes*, *i.e.*, pieces of matter to which this power was attributed, being detached or detachable, or objects in nature such as the sun, the moon, the earth, a mountain, lake or tree. The belief that all these are possessed of volition similar to our own is sometimes called *animism*, and the race have emancipated themselves from it by a process similar to that by which children emancipate themselves from the notion that chairs and tables possess volition similar to their own. The *imaginary* object of worship is the conjectural cause of visible or sensible operations. If the plant, *e.g.*, be not thought to have a will of its own, it may yet be supposed to be under the direction of a being similar to ourselves. The natural process in which the plant is concerned will then be produced by a quasi-human agency, though the plant itself is no longer credited

with intelligence and volition. This belief is intermediate between the naïve supposition that the plant is an agent and the scientific belief that the processes which affect the plant are illustrations of laws. Progress consists in the constant substitution of the notions of force and law for agencies with human wills.

The course of progress does not ordinarily do away with the naïve beliefs entirely. The Semitic religions as known to us exhibit therefore side by side ideas which appear to date from very different eras of human progress. That objects close at hand were not themselves capable of volition was detected very early; but in the case of distant objects, the sun, moon and stars, it took longer to find this out. But even in their case the idea that they were agents was presently discarded for the supposition that they were the possessions or the abodes of, or under the direction of, agents of another sort. These agents were usually thought of in human form, it being difficult for the grown man to associate volition with any other figure. The respect and worship paid to images of gods was therefore ordinarily symbolic; just as in some countries even at this time disrespect shown to the image of an emperor is a case of *lèse majesté*, so the image of a god in old times represented the god, but did not ordinarily present it. The worship of images is traceable to the same attitude of mind which induces a modern crowd to burn an image of a leading statesman; which induces a modern audience to hiss an actor who

performs the part of the villain of the piece. The intellectual calibre of each worshipper decided how far the image was to be dissociated from the being whom it was intended to represent.

Monotheism is reached when the deity is, in the first place, dissociated from connection with the human figure, and, in the second place, dissociated from particular places and particular functions, from particular interests and particular spheres of activity. To this notion the Semites (as distinct from the Israelites) did not, so far as we know, attain. But before the first migration from Arabia they would seem to have achieved the generalisation that there existed a class of beings capable of harming and helping, of which each member might be called *Ilu*, "god". This name, indeed, in some places is a proper name of one special deity; but in various forms it appears to serve as the class-name in all the Semitic languages. Most frequently a plural of it is used as the class-name; sometimes the plural of a plural. Some Semitic communities were not satisfied with one class of supernatural beings, but evolved several orders, such as nymphs, angels and demons.

Those who were born in these societies found themselves then in some sort of relation with a world of imaginary beings as well as with the material world of men and women. Their existence was an assumption which probably no one called in question. Each community was at any rate for a time connected with some one deity; but the choice of that deity seems

often to have been arbitrary. As has been seen, the founders of a nation took a "direction," and for such an enterprise the conduct of a god was indispensable; but a theory that the earth was portioned out between different gods often made the god worshipped by the settlers the local deity rather than one whom they had brought with them. Agglomerations of families in the same enterprise led to the simultaneous existence of several cults, of which, however, circumstances would make one or other take the lead. Hence it happens that the god who is supreme in one State is often found occupying an honourable position in another. Dagon or Dagan, in Eli's time chief god of the Philistines; Rimmon or Ramman, in Elisha's time chief god of the Syrians; Ashtoreth, chief goddess of the Sidonians; Chemosh, chief god of Moab, all meet us in other communities, some at a very great distance. The same is the case with gods whom the antiquarians specify as connected with special Arab tribes. This is due to the gods forming a *community*, out of which it was possible to select special objects of reverence without offending others. The reputation of the gods also rose and sank with that of the communities associated with them. Those whom the great States honoured were likely to find devotees in other countries. The attachment of individual worshippers often brought them from one place to another.

3. Names of Gods.—In Greek States, it is well known, each member of the community was the

devotee of a number of gods simultaneously, because he was necessarily a member of a number of societies (*i.e.*, a family, a tribe, a village community, and a State), each one of which was presided over by one or more gods. Further, the males and females of a family were by the fact of their sex under the control of different deities. It is probable, though not perhaps certain, that the practice of the Semitic States was similar. What is clear in any case is that the names of gods and cities were sometimes the same. The names of Tyre and Sidon were both names of gods; the former (Sur) is familiar in the Old Testament, and the latter figures in Punic inscriptions. In several cases, too, the names of tribes, and even those of individuals, were identical with the names of gods. A Biblical example is *Gad*, the name of the founder of a tribe and also of an idol worshipped by Israelitish pagans. The word signifies good fortune, and corresponds in meaning with Sa'd, also a familiar man's name and the name of a god. Other cases are Kusayy, Kais or Kish, Hijr, Salman. Several practices were probably current simultaneously. Either a god was arbitrarily given a name used also by men—and, as we have seen, the difference between the two in current conceptions was apt to be slight; or the name which a tribe had got gave rise to the existence of a god who represented its unity.

The *names* of many gods appear, therefore, to admit of no further analysis. Some (*e.g.*, Hobal,

Ta'lab) have no obvious meaning, though cognate words exist; others, like men's names, are taken from animals, *e.g.*, Nasr "vulture," Thaur "ox".

A large number appear to mean no more than "master," "lord," "king," "lady". This is the case with the familiar Baal, of which the Assyrian form Bel, though the proper name of a god, is also applied to human rulers. Melech, Molech, Milcom, are dialectic varieties of a word meaning "king" or "possessor". Adonis (known from Greek writers) is the North Semitic word for "master". Beltis (whence Beltishazzar is derived) is merely the feminine of Bel. Sometimes these words are defined by a local or territorial name following them. This is especially the case in South Arabia with the words *Dhu* and *Dhat*, meaning "master" and "mistress". Baal Lebanon, "Lord of Lebanon"; Baal Sidon, "Lord of Sidon"; Baalath Gebal, "Lady of Gebal"; Dhu Shara, "owner of Shara"; Dhat Hima, Dhat Ba'dan, etc., are examples, and may be compared with Baal Shamaim and Malcath Shamaim (Jeremiah, vii. 18), "Lord of Heaven" and "Queen of Heaven". In origin these titles are sometimes equivalent to "the unknown god"; that the place or region must be under the control of a god was assumed, but the name of the particular god was never ascertained. Thus the people of Byblus seem to have been satisfied with "Lady of Gebal" as the name of their goddess from the time of the Tell-el-Amarna tablets to the fourth century B.C. These names may, how-

ever, sometimes stand as more respectful modes of address than a proper name would be; and, indeed, gods who have proper names are often specialised as possessors of certain regions. Finally, through changes in language these names have a tendency to be so altered as to assume the appearance of proper names: Baasshamin is one of many contractions used for the name of the Lord of Heaven, in which the etymology has a tendency to become obscure, Dhu Shara was known to the Greeks as Dusares.

Another class of gods are named from qualities ascribed to them: Aziz, "mighty"; Al-Uzza, "the mightiest lady"; Rimmon for Rahman, "loving"; Rahum, "merciful"; Bashir, "bringer of good tidings"; Il-Makkah, "hearing god"; perhaps Sid, "fishing god," are examples. With these names we may compare the Roman principle of inventing a god to account for an occurrence or an operation.

Assyrian research has shown that the names of several well-known gods were of foreign origin, though the antiquarians in each country (their philological sense being less keen than that which has since been developed) were often misled by popular etymology. Thus the Phœnicians thought that the name Dagan meant corn god; the commentators on 1 Samuel, even in ancient times, thought it meant fish god; but the word is now said to be Sumerian, and to be unconnected in origin with these ideas.

Besides the gods for whom the name "lord" served, and those who were simply called "god" or

"object of worship" (Arabic *mudan*), there was probably a class that had no name, being thought of collectively. Such were the household gods mentioned in the Old Testament with the name Teraphim; others of whom we occasionally hear were associated with Phœnician gods, whose attendants they were thought to be.

The name would seem to have been of very varying importance. Sometimes one god is said to bear the name of another; and a theory of which we find traces was that a god would only answer to his right name, which, therefore, it was important that the worshipper or the intermediary should know. In most States, however, the god's name was a familiar one, ordinarily on the lips of his worshippers, just as the name of the king would be. The Israelitish objection to mentioning the names of foreign deities is based on a doctrine that whatever has a name has an existence. To mention the names of these gods would then imply that they were personalities.

4. Mixture of Gods.—It is not therefore possible to draw up a complete list of Semitic gods, or even to localise many of the cults with certainty. Where they are named after places the local name has often many competitors, out of which it is difficult to name the earliest. Such a god as Dhu Shara must, *e.g.*, have originally been connected with a place called Shara, to which many in the Arabic geographies correspond; he figures in Arabic history as the god of a tribe called Daus, and in inscriptions as the chief

god of the Nabatæans during the reign of Aretas; while classical authors make him the Arabic Dionysus (or wine god), worshipped by the Arabs generally, with a seat on the highest peak of Arabia. A god Reshef, known chiefly from Cyprian inscriptions, was found to figure among four North Syrian gods in an inscription discovered in 1890. Fresh finds of inscriptions are apt to reveal fresh names, or to give evidence of the worship of deities at a great distance from the places with which we are accustomed to associate them. The Semitic races, moreover, showed at all times great readiness to adopt foreign cults. It is, however, likely that in each place certain cults enjoyed temporary popularity, if not to the entire exclusion of others, yet in such a degree as to reduce the others to obscurity. Thus, in the Aramaic inscription referred to, the king gives the title "my gods" to the four Hadad, Shams, Il, and Reshef; in Carthaginian tablets Baal Hamman and Tanith, "Face of Baal," enjoy exclusive consideration; in Palmyrene inscriptions the triad of the sky god, the sun god and the moon god occupy the most prominent position; in South Arabian inscriptions the gods Il-Makkih and Tha'lab, the former ascribed to Harran, the latter to Riyam, occupy chief attention; while different Assyrian kings make different lists of gods under whose auspices they have accomplished their triumphs.

We could not without a complete series of political and family records state with certainty how these

gods got together. Rarely indeed we possess documents informing us when a cult was first admitted to a community; thus, by accident, we have the deed by which a god Selem was admitted to Tayma, and also learn something of endeavours made to bring Ishtar to Egypt. Intermarriage of families probably was one of the modes in which different cults were brought together; moreover, migrants brought their own objects of worship, which they durst not neglect, while forced to adopt those of the places whither they went; and where cities were stormed the conquerors often retained the old worship, supposing that the gods had not departed, but merely withdrawn their favour from former worshippers. The idea that one cult excluded another seems to have had very little recognition except among the Israelites.

5. Character of Gods.—Of the gods naturally nothing was actually known. But where the deity was an object in nature, such as the sun, the moon, the sky, a mountain, a river, the sea, mythical explanations were given of the phenomena connected therewith; whence it comes that we find in very different parts of the world myths, of which the object is clearly to account for earthquakes, eclipses, droughts, etc. Moreover, running water and fire present an appearance of life and volition which readily gives rise to stories in which they figure as persons. When the old explanations of the physical phenomena have been outgrown, owing to observation and discovery, the myths survive as narratives.

These then form the framework of a mythology into which in advanced communities, such as those of Phœnicia and Assyria, the inventions of poets and the deductions of antiquarians are woven.

Many tales that figured in these mythologies were merely efforts of the imagination ; curiosity, the desire to know more about interesting characters, has enriched the history of most nations. But much is also due to antiquarian speculations. To them it is due that various gods and goddesses are identified with those popular objects of reverence, the sun, the moon and the sky, without having originally had any connection with them.

Moreover where a number of these beings were worshipped simultaneously, the antiquarians endeavoured to discover their sex, and to invent relationships ; they discovered that gods and goddesses stood to each other in such relations as father and son, husband and wife, etc. In Assyria Asshur counted as father of the gods, and Ishtar as their mother. In Aramaic cities Al-lat was called the mother of the gods. In Arabia it is asserted there were those who believed the gods to be all daughters of Allah. There is also a tendency to provide the gods and goddesses with suitable partners, whence Beltis springs up by the side of Bel, and perhaps Ashtoreth by the side of Athtar. Grounds for filiation are to be found in myths, whence the sun god is made son of the moon god, owing to the theory that night preceded day. To antiquarian research it is probably due that on

the one hand gods are sometimes identified and fused in a double name, *e.g.*, Ashtoreth Chemosh, Eshmun Melkarth, Eshmun Ashtoreth, Hadad Rimmon, perhaps Baal Gad; while, on the other hand, the same name is broken up into a variety of identities, *e.g.*, Ishtar of Nineveh and Ishtar of Arbail, who figure side by side in inscriptions; such local names as Anathoth, the "Anaths," are also to be explained as due to the worship of a number of forms of the goddess Anath simultaneously. A more advanced theology represented one god as a form of another; in Carthaginian inscriptions a goddess is regularly described as Baal's *face*, and some similar designations are found elsewhere.

The discrimination of *functions* as between different gods probably belonged to the theology of the learned, rather than to the popular religion. The god of a community had to provide it with the things of which it stood in need; and these needs were ordinarily simple—male children, various forms of produce, protection and recovery from disease, victory over enemies. For all these objects the same gods are supplicated and thanked. It was when wants became more complicated and observation more accurate that the same persons applied to different gods for different things. The fact of such specialisation seems ordinarily to betray foreign influence. Thus an inscription in which Eshmun is described as the healing god, and one in which Anath is called the might of life, and one in which Melkarth is described

as a leader of emigrants, have each a Greek translation attached to them. In Assyria, where considerable specialisation is discernible, the influence of a foreign priesthood is unquestionable. Nevertheless even there (as in Greece) it was difficult to confine the gods to their functions. When a man desired anything, almost any god could in theory provide it.

As has been seen, the ordinary trend of Semitic religion was from nature-worship to anthropomorphism. A god, having ceased to be identical with a mountain, a tree, the sun, etc., was represented by an image; and a system of distinguishing symbols was introduced whereby the image of one god might be known from that of another. This idea may have come from Egypt, whence the Phœnicians derived much, but is in itself obvious enough. In some Syrian States the triad of gods representing the sky, sun and moon, are distinguished by a calathus, a disc of rays and a couple of horns respectively. The story of Dagon (1 Samuel v.) shows that he was represented in human form; and representations of the god Reshef on Phœnician gems take human form also with distinctive characteristics. Where gods were represented otherwise (as Hamman by two columns), the difficulty of finding artists capable of making a statue may have sometimes been the reason; whereas in other cases "stones that fell from heaven" would be retained as representations of a deity after they had ceased to be worshipped as gods. The prophetic assertion that the value of the

material whence the image was made varied with the means of the worshipper may be fully credited.

Where, as was often the case in Assyria, representations were made in stone of malignant beings, it has been suggested that the purpose was to confine the fiend to the stone, to fix him in it so that he could not move. What was the underlying idea in the case of images of animals, where such were made to fill shrines, is not so clear.

6. Duties towards Gods.—The first assumption with regard to the gods was that they required to be *propitiated*. This was to be accomplished by the same means as were shown by experience to be effective in propitiating men—except, indeed, where an animal was worshipped, whose wants might be studied. The great bulk of religious practices may be traced to the belief that the god wants what man wants. The most universal want being food and drink, these were everywhere supplied them in the form of sacrifice and libation. Residences or shelters were provided for them when desirable. Oil was poured on their heads. Incense was burned for them to smell: in some communities they were provided with human consorts. Their good-will was also sought by demonstrations of affection: in one Arabian community those who went foraging stroked the image at starting and on returning; and the kissing of images was a common practice. Gifts similar to those used in propitiating princes were lavished on them. Where literature and art flourished they

were honoured with encomiums; entertainments were got up for their amusement. Flattery was bestowed on them similar to that bestowed on princes. In many States their services were commemorated by public testimonials, in the form of tablets or pillars similar to those which recorded the services of men.

There was, therefore, a tendency to make the gods the replica of the kings, and we possess not a few tablets in which the devotee mentions the god and the king side by side, and bestows on both the same or similar attributes. Where the form of government known as Oriental despotism was developed, the god was regarded as the king's god; the subject in speaking of the god called him the god of my lord. Yet the identification of the two, so common in Western States, seems so far as the inscriptions guide us to have made little way with the Semites. Where kings are called gods, they are Greek or Roman monarchs. The King of Byblus (fifth century B.C.) declares that the Lady of Byblus had "made him" king, and desires her to give him favour in the eyes of gods and men. In the oligarchic States of South Arabia clients request the god to give them favour in the eyes of the ruling caste. But whereas the practices of religion are largely based on primitive wants, as religion progressed, it seems certain that men regularly argued from the king's desires to the god's desires. That a god was pleased by flattery could only be known by

experience in a fairly developed civilisation, where the desire for "the lion's share" of the food had long given way to, or at least been associated with, the desire for loftier pleasures. The nature of the worship was also constantly regulated by the ideas of the head of the State, who would naturally suppose his god to have the same tastes as himself. We have in judging the theories that resulted to remember that our ideas of virtue and decorum are the result of an infinite series of experiments, and should not be surprised at the theories of what a god wished occasionally producing rites which seem revolting and humiliating to the deity.

The gratification of the wants of the gods may be treated in the following order: (*a*) Residences; (*b*) Gifts; (*c*) Servants; (*d*) Food; (*e*) Sympathy; (*f*) Entertainment.

(*a*) *Residences of the Gods.*—Where the god was an object in nature, such as a rock or a tree, naturally housing him was out of the question. Such a god could be visited, and his honours paid him where he stood. And the same could be done with animals whose haunts would be known. Where a heavenly body was worshipped, that, too, could not be housed, but it might be approached from the nearest point; and the practice of offering sacrifices on heights (Assyrian and Hebrew *Bamah*) or mountain-tops is probably due to this notion. In the case of the latter the belief that meteoric gods actually dwelt on them was widely spread, owing to the phenomena of clouds

and winds connected with them; where a mountain bears a divine name, such as Sinai or Nebo, there is the vague confusion between the dwelling-place and the embodiment of the god to which attention has already been called. Worship on these "high-places" survived, as we know, in Israelitish communities long after the endeavour to centralise worship at Jerusalem had been repeatedly made.

Where the god was thought of apart from objects in nature, and was regarded as a man, whether represented by a symbol or not, he needed a residence. Of tents for gods we read in the reproaches of Micah, where the Israelites are taunted with carrying the tents of their gods about with them in the desert; and the Tabernacle was probably no great innovation in religious practice. A tent has the advantage of enabling vessels of all sorts to be reserved for special uses, so that when the tent is pitched they can be deposited in their places.

Of temples set up by stationary communities there must have been many sorts. A word rendered "grove" in the Authorised Version signifies in Assyrian any sacred place, often, doubtless, a shrine for the shelter of the god on the roadside. The sole surviving specimen of a Semitic temple, the Kaabah at Meccah, is not much more elaborate. It is a cubic shed representing a primitive form of architecture. In one of the walls there is inserted the black stone, an object of veneration, which, however, does not appear to have been the original nucleus of the

temple. It was rather a shelter for one or more gods: in Mohammed's time, if tradition may be trusted, for as many as 365. The ceremonies of the pilgrimage, however, show that many gods were still thought to reside on the neighbouring mountains.

The style of the temples, of course, varied with the wealth and artistic ideas of the community. The temples seem ordinarily to have been separate, even different forms of the same god having separate houses. Thus at Sidon the same royal couple built temples to Ashtoreth and to Ashtoreth "name of Baal". An inscription records the existence of three temples on the small island of Gaulus near Malta. Where gods were thought to be closely connected, as, *e.g.*, by the marital relation, they sometimes shared a temple.

Every temple that was more than a shrine probably had a sanctuary containing the God's image; but it is probable that in large cities they also had rooms which would serve for public meetings. The story of the Temple of Dagon at Gaza (Judges xvi. 21-30) suggests a building similar to a modern mosque. Inscriptions remain telling of porches, ornamental staircases and avenues of pillars attached to temples of the sun and other deities. The temples of some of the great Semitic cities were as famous in their day as are the cathedrals of Paris, Milan and Cologne now.

Even in settled communities some considerable amount of worship seems to have been carried on

in the open air. Since men of wealth had parks it was natural that the gods should have them also. Moreover, the sacred tree is not unfrequently mentioned, whether as an embodiment of a deity or as a natural residence for one.

It is doubtless true that the sacred enclosure existed before the idea of lodging gods in houses, and lasted on after that usage had been developed. The idea of private ownership as connected with that sort of territory comes in rather late; the words used of such sacred land are chiefly negative words, such as imply that mankind are kept off, rather than that the gods are the owners. Where such sacred territory was employed for residence by tribes and communities, certain restrictions on the free use of it ordinarily continued in vogue; certain acts might not be performed by those who were on the territory, or persons in certain conditions had to be driven off it. The treatment of territory thus was in ordinary cases the result of circumstances; the fact of its being the residence of a supernatural power would evince itself in some fashion obvious to the many or the few; and the prohibition connected therewith would be a measure of self-protection against the resulting danger; the place had (to borrow Frazer's metaphor) to be insulated. Many of Frazer's fascinating pages are occupied with the analysis of this notion of "sanctity," which in many primitive religions causes the extremes of holiness and uncleanness to have

much in common. The object is in either case supposed to be charged with a sort of electricity, which is fraught with danger to him who approaches. The house of the god would doubtless be often built on land which was supposed to be blessed with his presence; and, indeed, the worshipper would not have been in ordinary cases entitled to give a god a house without some security that the site would be a pleasing one. Of the orientation of temples we probably have no records; yet it is unlikely that a matter of such importance went without rules; and the Arabic words connected with orientation in mosques seem to be ancient.

(b) *Gifts to Gods*.—In a temple, as a god's residence, his goods were naturally, so far as possible, stored. These consisted of gifts, of which there might be any sort. Inscriptions belonging to different States record offerings of metallic vessels, such as cups and censers, some of these being the first products of factories, or made out of the spoils of war. Often, however, the gifts were of a sort which did not admit of such treatment. Such were lands, trees, flocks and herds. An inscription from Larnaka in Cyprus records a gift of "beasts roaming at large at the extremity of the lands of Larnak"; another (the stone of Tayma) records a gift of a number of date-trees to a new arrival. Gifts of furniture in the shape of thrones and of statues were common. It is probable therefore that the temples came to serve as treasuries or banks, as was the case in the Greek States, and even now in

some Mohammedan countries, and in Carthage the State archives were stored in one of them.

Presents of *slaves* are likely to have been common. A not unfrequent type of inscription in South Arabia records the devotion by a man of himself and all his goods, and his family, or tribe, and all their goods to a god. The text that goes farthest in this matter is one from Yemen : " Yuhain, son of Ishmael, King of the Samai, dedicated to Ta'lab himself, his sons Zaid and Zaidil, all his other children, his goods and his fortress Ya'ud, his estate Ta'alluk, and all his goods and the goods of his father Ishmael, the goods, lands, houses, etc., of his grandfather Samahafik, whether in town or country," etc. The import of a gift on this scale is not clear ; it is probable that by such an act a god was made protector of the common goods, or the owners were secured from expropriation. The South Arabian inscriptions record many offerings which were not deposited in temples : statues especially that were set up within fortresses, but apparently not in any sacred place.

Gifts of clothing and ornaments, such as those recorded in Exodus, were probably common. Arabic tradition tells of earrings and bracelets put on images ; and the covering of the Ka'bah, still renewed yearly, has been compared to the adornment of a bride. We need scarcely doubt that Ashtoreth, like Athene, desired rich and gay clothing. Owing to the perishable nature of this sort of gift it is not surprising that few records of it survive.

In some communities a definite share of the produce was bestowed on the god, or, if tradition is to be believed, portions were assigned different gods by lot.

The votive tablets, as a rule, record the purpose of these gifts. They are either thankofferings for assistance rendered in war, agriculture, or other daily occupation; or they are propitiatory, usually for the life of the giver and his children. In Phœnician communities the formula ordinarily runs "because he (or she) heard his voice and answered him," or, "heard his voice and may she bless". The South Arabian tablets go more fully into details of the nature of the service, and the occasion on which it was rendered. They also end often with prayers for the continuation of such favours. Pleasant relations between clients and their patrons are a familiar request in these tablets. Similarly kings hope to secure the good-will of their subjects by gifts to the national gods.

Those Semitic proper names of which one element is a divine name often throw light on the services which the gods were supposed to render in return. Names meaning "Whom Baal delivered," or "redeemed," are no less common than "Whom Baal," or some other god, "gave". The operation to which reference is made in the former case is that of being safely delivered, to which the Psalms make frequent allusion; and the word "redeemed" implies some notion, like that of the Persians, that some

death-power would, but for the intervention of the deity, have seized the child.

(c) *Servants of the Gods.*—The inscriptions and the tradition together help us to trace the existence and nature of the priesthood with fair certainty. The Semitic languages have no one word for priest; the word used in the Bible and in Canaanitish communities means in Arabic "soothsayer"; the Aramaic word employed in the Bible for pagan priest appears to be Indo-Germanic in origin; and South Arabia and Assyria have words of their own. The word Levite appears to mean originally "one who is attached": the Arabic words for freedman (one attached to a master) and saint (one attached to God) come from the same stem.

It is clear, therefore, that the origin of priesthood in different communities was different. In early societies where the god was a familiar object, and, indeed, one of the family, there was clearly no occasion for any intermediary. When once a god was housed, the need for some one to look after his house became apparent. At the Temple of Meccah, which probably represents very early Semitic ideas, we find temple-keepers. The office was in Mohammed's time honourable, though probably unpaid, and belonged by right to a certain family. Still more were such officials required where the community carried about a tent; in both these cases the development of the priesthood may be considered part of the specialisation of industry.

In the Larnaka tables the sacrificers are mentioned as a separate class; in the Marseilles tariff it is the priest who offers the sacrifice, and in developed States the offering of sacrifice was the business of a special minister. In the primitive community the paterfamilias would be able to do all that was required; and we do not know in how many States the slaughter of any animal was (as with Jews and Mohammedans still) a religious rite. Traditions, however, quickly accumulate both as to the parts of the animal which the god likes and as to the right manner of slaughtering; and special knowledge is invariably confined to classes or castes.

The priests in North Semitic communities are called (as we have seen) by a word which means "augur," and in the Israelitish society the only legitimate form of augury was confined to the priests. In the early societies it is probable that this gift (in some form or other) was possessed by individuals, who in time made it a hereditary profession. The person who can understand the language of the gods is the fittest person to serve as an intermediary on all occasions; whence we see that the professions of priest and prophet only separate when the former represents a privileged corporation. In most cults, it would appear, the appearance of the entrails of the animal gave some account of the disposition of the god.

Finally, there were in different places persons who were devoted by their parents to the service of some

god, or who devoted themselves. The devotion might be indicated by giving the child in adoption to a god, whence we get such names as Ben-Hadad, "son of the god Hadad," and Benchodesh, "son of the new moon"; or it might mean lifelong exercise of a profession. Various modes in which attachment to a god might be symbolised are mentioned casually in the Old Testament; some mark on the body, especially letting the hair grow long or cutting it off, tattooing, etc., served as a common badge.

In many States the king was *ex officio* priest of the national god; just as the King of Salem in Abraham's time was priest of El Elyon, so kings of Sidon call themselves priests of Ashtoreth, and their queens her priestesses; and in South Arabia the chiefs of a tribe sometimes style themselves also priests of a sanctuary. This title in developed communities must have implied little more than honorary duties; the king would have neither time nor taste to do the drudgery connected with a popular worship. This was done by a permanent staff of officials, such as are in some Carthaginian inscriptions styled the people or the populace either of a god or of a temple. We do not know whether there was any difference between these two classes; the same appears in the designations of the slaves, who are at times slaves of a god, at others of a god's house. The "Larnaka tables," some fragments of a treasury book connected with the worship at Larnaka, give the names of a variety of officers. There were gate-keepers and

curtain-keepers, singers male and female, young men and maidens, barbers, sacrificers, masons and builders, besides others whose duties may be passed over. Carthaginian tablets repeatedly mention "barbers of the gods," whose duties were probably to keep the priests shaven; one mentions a man whose duty was to light the sacred lamps. Some of these duties would be performed by slaves, others by citizens. It is probable that these tables give a fair idea of the quantity of the staff which a great Semitic temple was likely to require.

The position of the priest as the god's *vicar* is one of which many cults show illustrations, though it may not everywhere have been a developed theory. Each year of accumulated experience in a quiet State rendered the discharge of duties by the gods themselves less and less possible; the greater the average intelligence the more had the difficulties connected with the assumption of their existence to be artificially veiled. It is probable that in the obscene practices connected with several worships the worshippers were taking the place of gods, as in the Bacchanalian orgies the Bacchants seem to have taken the name of their chief. In the case of the ordinary sacrifice the parts consumed by the priest were, indeed, properly speaking, perquisites; *i.e.*, portions given in payment for a definite service. Still the difference between the part given to the god and that given to his minister had a tendency to evanesce. Should doubts suggest themselves as to

the existence of the god—and that these were never present seems unlikely—the priest was there to quell them. He had personal acquaintance with the god and could testify. If the ordinary worshipper wished to obtain a favour from the god, the priest introduced him, he served as the god's chamberlain or vizier. We do not know how far in the advanced communities the gods ever came to be a political fiction, but the readiness with which foreign worships were adopted seems to testify to a tendency in places that way.

The ministers were in part supported by the temple revenues, where land or other property had been settled on the temple; but where they discharged a duty for the benefit of an individual, they were paid by a commission, except in the case of the very poor. Thus we learn from a series of temple tariffs belonging to the Carthaginian temples that the commission of the priest varied with the value of the sacrifice, and consisted partly in a payment of money and partly in meat; the sin of Eli's sons, it will be remembered, consisted in part in requiring an improper commission. The nature of the perquisite varied with the custom of different societies. The practice of reserving either the first-fruits or a definite proportion of the produce for the use of the gods is occasionally attested by inscriptions. Still in many places cults were in the hands of wealthy land-owners or merchants who gained in status by possessing them. We are told that at Meccah the

right of entertaining strangers who came for the pilgrimage was regarded as a valuable privilege. Those who built temples out of their own means probably left the duty of keeping them up to their descendants; and the retention of the cult within the family would often bring power and influence that indemnified them for the expense.

(*d*) *Food of the Gods.*—Much has been written about the origin of the Semitic sacrifice, and ingenious theories of its origin have been propounded. Whether these be correct or not, they go back to a period far earlier than the separation of the Semitic communities, and farther than it is possible to trace them. They are also based to some extent on uncertain etymologies and untrustworthy analogies. Even if these theories be historically correct, the consciousness of the original meaning of the sacrifices had been lost long before the time at which we become acquainted with the Semitic States.

At this time the sacrifice represents the operation of a variety of instincts. One is the survival of the supposition that the god enjoys what man enjoys, and requires meals at the same times as man. This doctrine accounts for the daily sacrifices. The nature of the animal offered was settled by usage, dictated originally by geographical and climatic considerations. Thus in Arabia the camel was a favourite sacrifice, whereas in the Carthaginian tariffs the camel does not figure. In origin this fact must be due to the importance of the camel in Arabia,

owing to its suitability to the conditions of that country; and similar causes dictated other practices. The real cause escapes the early speculators, in whose opinion a custom exists because it has been established by a legislator, not because necessity and accident have led up to it.

For several Semitic communities the practice of human sacrifice is attested, and this may date from a period of cannibalism, when human flesh was commonly eaten; but more often it seems to have a very different origin, and to be more akin to the conception of sacrifice as handing over to god a substitute for oneself. Frazer has shown that in some primitive communities the king has to be killed when in the prime of life, lest the power that supports the State grow feeble, and that in course of time this necessity is evaded, first by the substitution of the king's nearest relative, presently by some victim more distant and less precious. Human sacrifice in this case would only by a confusion of ideas be regarded as the food of the gods.

But a third notion, which is familiar in all communities, is that of persuading the god by a present to do what one desires. In this case the difficulty lies in the choice of a gift and in finding a process by which the god is to get hold of it. Sending an animal away into the wilderness and consuming it by fire may be regarded as both of them expedients for the attainment of this end.

The sacrificial lists which we possess enumerate

the objects which would ordinarily figure on the tables of the wealthy, as well as on those of the gods. In rare cases, beasts or birds were offered to gods which were forbidden food for men; in many the god shared his meal with his worshippers; and where there was leisure for theology, sacrifices were classified according to the amount which went to the god. A less scientific classification is that according to the nature of the food offered; for this depended to some extent on the means of the worshipper, though naturally the difference between nomad and agricultural communities left considerable traces on the practice. A mode of making dough serve instead of animal sacrifices was to offer figures of creatures in paste. In the case of the bloodless sacrifice the god's taste was naturally that of the community: and so in Arabia we find offerings of dates. The drink-offering no less than the meat-offering combines a variety of ideas. On the one hand, the gods were supposed to require liquid as well as solid sustenance—whence in Phœnician communities we find sacrifices of milk; on the other, there was a doctrine current that what the gods required was blood rather than flesh—whence the word used in the Old Testament for drink-offering stands in other dialects for blood-offering, meaning a slaughtered animal. Indeed this word seems identical with the oldest Semitic word for "to sacrifice". Various superstitions connected with blood have been brought into connection with these

facts: but if the consciousness of an ordinary worshipper had been interrogated, he would probably have declared the drink-offering of wine to be the natural accompaniment of the sacrifice of meat or fruit, standing to it in the relation of drink to food. The introduction of wine-offerings must therefore date from a period when the anthropomorphic theory still found great favour.

The absence of documents renders it difficult to trace the growth of expedients for dealing with the fact that the gods did not consume their food—except, indeed, where the law of gravitation could serve in their stead. Food that had been offered to a god probably acquired some sort of sanctity, and could only be consumed by certain persons or at certain times. The rules connected therewith varied very much with the notions of sacred orders that developed in different communities; and in many it is probable that the notion of sanctity became exceedingly loose. In prosperous States, while, on the one hand, theological speculation has a tendency to place fresh and ever fresh burdens on the people, on the other hand, the accumulation of experience tends to tear the veil off sacred things, and make some men, at any rate, pry behind the curtain. Where we have only fragments of history left, it is impossible to estimate with any probability the resultant of these forces.

(e) *Sympathy.*—In most States the gods were propitiated not only by honours paid them, but also

by pain and privation undergone by the worshipper. Many ancient rites and practices were explained as the commemoration of some misfortune that a god had undergone, and the greater the display of grief the more would the god be gratified. The wailing for Tammuz mentioned by Ezekiel (viii. 14), doubtless identical with the wailing for Adonis so graphically described by the Alexandrian Theocritus, is the most famous of these ceremonies. What is noteworthy is that the wailing seems to have taken place in very different places, where it was associated with very different names, but that the rites and on the whole the stories bear a close resemblance to each other. The practices seem to have been put together out of a variety of elements. Sympathetic magic, *i.e.*, the performance of an act on a small scale in the hope that a god will perform it on a large one, lies at the base of some of the rites; and the reproduction of situations or conditions, by way of perpetuating the memory of them, is the secret of others. Thus the time of the year when in an early state of civilisation produce is exhausted is the time when men at a later period have religious fasts; but the nature of the situation reproduced is often forgotten. When the lugubrious ceremony is explained as sympathy with the sufferings of a god, the well-known Indian doctrine of propitiating by pain usually takes the lead of the other theories associated with the act.

This doctrine probably is the source of a variety of

bodily mutilations which men underwent. Illustrations of men cutting themselves with knives are to be found in the Bible; a less painful sacrifice was that of the hair or part of it. The priest or priestess, in the case of some of the Phœnician gods, did not marry.

The attitude adopted in approaching a god seems ordinarily to have been that of a slave approaching his master. The words used for piety have a tendency to mean terror or timidity; the word ordinarily used in the Old Testament for "to bow" suggests the attitude in which a captive begs life from his conqueror. The same is the state of mind suggested by other words implying devotional attitudes. Bowing the knees, kissing the feet (or the face), prostrating oneself, are all indicative of abject submission.

(*f*) *Entertainments.*—Where a community lived on produce collected at some season of the year, such season was a natural occasion for festivities, in which, of course, the gods took a leading part; the real occasion of the gathering was often concealed under a number of mythical causes. The popularity of the moon god or goddess was in part due to the facilities provided by the moon for dating before the more difficult solar calendar was introduced; and the appearance of certain constellations was in many places thought to stand in some causal connection with the seasons of the year. Owing to migration of tribes feasts were kept up at times which had ceased to bear any relation to the actual business of the country.

For the purpose of the collection of produce and the manifestation of festivity the community had to collect at a single spot; and one of the words used for feast in Canaanitish, and thence borrowed by the Greeks, who have again lent it to the Turks, appears to mean "presenting oneself," and is the same word which in other contexts has come to signify "capital," meaning the place of the monarch's presence. The sense of the word which also implies pilgrimage is not so clear; but that it is an ancient word in this sense is shown by the name of a month in South Arabia called after it, and also by the Mohammedan usage which is inherited from the earlier paganism. The feast, signifying the gathering of the community at some particular spot, had then partly commercial, partly political, and partly religious significance; the earlier the society the harder it is to keep these three matters apart. It had the advantage of keeping up the recollection of original relationship in tribes that had become separated, and of leading to the reservation of part of the year for peace, since otherwise the tribes could not have assembled. The creation of a new centre invariably meant the breaking with old ties. The ceremonies of the Meccan pilgrimage apparently contain many relics of antiquity of which the meaning is lost; while some, *e.g.*, the kissing of the black stone, seem to belong to the ordinary ritual of idolatry, others seem to resemble the Greek games, and to be connected with displays of strength and skill.

Such festivals seem to have contributed to the growth of culture, since new forms of entertainment, when devised, found in them the best occasions for exhibition. In the system of small and independent States which seems to have prevailed in Palestine from the earliest immigration to the times of the latest Babylonian kings, many reasons rendered it advisable to celebrate the feasts in the metropolis; and, though the gods were often connected with special places, it seems to have been regarded as possible to instal them afresh in new-built houses. The Sidonian inscription of King Eshmunazar contains a formula which seems to refer to this process. Nevertheless, the original or favourite home of the god was likely to be visited on special occasions; and indeed the existence of shrines erected at such places seems often to have led to the growth of towns, men desiring to be near the gods; such proper names as "Neighbour of Melkkarth" commemorate this doctrine.

Religious dances are known from the Old Testament and are to be compared with the Arabic custom of marching or running round sacred objects. The Aramaic word for "praise" or "hymn" originally refers to the rhythmical motion of the limbs. As music and poetry were invented, they were naturally drawn into the service of the gods. The shouts at the appearance of the new moon seem to give the origin of the ordinary Hebrew word for "psalm". We are, however, unable to trace the process by

which inarticulate shouts developed into poetry, and by which poems obtained a fixed place in religious service. The literature of the Babylonians supplies us with many examples of sacred poetry, doubtless liturgically used; and the Babylonian myths and epics, often written in a kind of verse, probably were literary exercises in honour of gods, meant for communication at mysteries. These narratives, of which different editions differ considerably, were probably communicated to the poets by inspiration, and, therefore, dissociated from the notion of historical accuracy. The part assigned to different deities in the epics varied with the personal predilections of particular authors.

7. Prophecy.—Among all primitive races the help of the gods was not only desired in action, but also for guidance; and it was desirable on a variety of occasions to know their will, or at any rate to know the future with their aid.

The "practices of the Amorite" stand in Scripture as a general name for the modes in which this was compassed. They were mostly infantile guesses at the disposition of the gods from casual appearances, or from the mixture of metaphor with reality; in settled communities these were elaborated into systems. We have seen that the word used for "priest" in Canaanitish originally meant "soothsayer"; and another word which occasionally meets us in the Hebrew Bible for "prophet" means really "speaker in rhymed prose"—the mode in which these oracles were regularly conveyed. The name for this style

of composition is derived from the cooing of the dove, which it is supposed to resemble; and it is likely that the actual cooing of doves was at one time regarded as oracular and interpreted in this style.

The voice and movements of birds were with the Semites as with the Greeks a constant source of augury. Most of the words signifying bird are used also in connection with divination; and there is reason for thinking that in some nations the classes of birds that prophesied by their modes of flight and those that prophesied vocally were distinguished. One Hebrew word for prophet seems to refer to the process of observing their flight; and there are in the Arabic language relics of an augural terminology referring to the movements of animals.

The regular source of information was, however, the dream, in which the god either himself appeared to the worshipper, or conveyed a message. The interpretation of these messages was no less difficult than the interpretation of the flight of birds. A papyrus of the fourth century B.C. gives us a specimen of a dream and its interpretation in an Aramaic community, but is unfortunately too fragmentary to give us much information. We need not doubt, however, that the ordinary method of interpretation consisted of a rough symbolism, of which Greek and Arabic writers provide us with examples.

The Old Testament furnishes us with a large vocabulary of words signifying various branches of the

black art. Of one practice, mentioned by Ezekiel, called divining by arrows, Arabic antiquarians have a great deal to say. Its purpose was originally to assign the shares in a slaughtered camel; and, from the custom of doing this by tossing, the word "to apportion" came to be regularly used for divination, and preserves that sense in languages which have otherwise lost the word. The arrows in use among the Arabs were ten in number, three winning and seven losing. The exact method by which they were used is not clear.

The prophet, who in many cases was the only person qualified to use such instruments, was the person to be consulted in all emergencies. The names by which he is called (seer, augur, dreamer, man with a message) imply that he acquires his information in some artificial way, or that he is the spokesman of some other power. Doubtless the healing of disease was one of the tasks which most frequently devolved upon him. There is a considerable charm-literature in Babylonian, in which various complaints or troubles are conjured away. It is probable that such charms were composed for the occasion by individuals who knew the god's language, or at any rate the manner in which he could be approached. All would depend on the right god being addressed, and the right phrases being employed. The classical case of the summoning of Balaam illustrates the belief in the power of words to accomplish an effect—a belief which seems to

have its origin in ideas contemporaneous with the discovery or invention of language. The theory, however, that by words men could be raised or lowered, made triumphant or humiliated, is one that was by no means current among the Semites only. The belief that disease can be quelled by words should involve a belief in evil spirits; but this we are not perhaps justified in assuming, except for those countries in which its existence is attested.

Frazer observes with justice that in settled communities these practices have a tendency to fall into disfavour, the more enlightened portion of the community contenting themselves with prayer and sacrifice. On the one hand, the power of raising the wind and bringing rain, or otherwise interfering with the order of nature, is too serious a matter to be left to the disposal of individual members of society; it has to be done officially, if at all. On the other hand, the accumulation of experiences resulting from a settled state of society produces naïve ways of bringing these effects into discredit; those who resort to them are considered behind the times. The desire for success which those who undertake to affect the order of nature naturally feel leads, moreover, to a certain amount of observation and experiment, and so to the beginnings of science.

8. Cosmogony.—We associate with religion certain speculations on the origin of things. So long as earth, heaven, sea, sun, moon, etc., are believed to be gods, theogony is mixed up with astronomy,

geography, and other physical inquiries. To the speculations of the Assyrians on these subjects attention was called in 1876 by Mr. George Smith, who was the first to decipher the tablets in which they are preserved. Since then they have been the subject of a very considerable literature.

These speculations take the form of fairy-tales, in which the primal chaos is personified, and after a struggle between gods and monsters, one god, Marduk, settles affairs and proceeds to create the different forms of life. Some of these tales have been traced to a period anterior to 2000 B.C., and they are shown by the evidence of Greek writers to have been still current about 300 B.C. The tales exhibit great inconsistencies, as, indeed, might be expected in works of the imagination. An account somewhat similar in style appears to have been current in Phœnicia, of which also some fragments are preserved by a Greek writer. Fairly close parallels to these tales are to be found in the Greek and Indian cosmogonies. They are, of course, works of the imagination, in which here and there an allegory can be traced. Probably each narrator was not only in the habit of altering and adding details from his own fancy, and even introducing fresh characters, where possible, but was even expected to do so. We cannot say how far these stories would have been accepted as the correct account of the origin of things among the small Semitic States of Palestine. Mohammed declared that in his time, if the idolaters

were asked who made heaven and earth, they would answer Allah—who, however, when booty was divided received a smaller share than other gods. Of course, this answer may have been put into their mouths by Mohammed, or may have been learnt by the Meccans from Christians. We have, indeed, little ground for supposing that the Semites were given to studying questions of which the character was unpractical; it is, however, probable that had the Babylonian myths been current among them, some allusions to these would have been found in inscriptions or art.

Of the Phœnician mythology preserved by Eusebius from the translation of the work of Sanchoniathon the accuracy is doubtful; it is, however, certain that it preserves many names which were not known to Greek writers, but which the discovery of Phœnician inscriptions enables us to identify and interpret. The work of the Phœnician writer seems to have been mainly a "book of origins," *i.e.*, an attempt to determine the authors of a variety of inventions. It is natural that maritime and piscatory matters were therein assigned special importance. The inventors of various forms of dwellings, of agricultural processes, and of letters also, are specified. The stories are otherwise no better and no worse than those in the Greek archæologies. The author seems to combine tradition with inferences drawn by himself from the proper names of the gods and goddesses. The Greek paraphrast certainly introduced some confusion by substituting Greek words for the Phœnician names in his text.

9. Morals.—The connection between the gods and morality is probably to be found in the need of order: the internal order of the State had to be preserved by the head of it. Certain forms of immorality which led to its dissolution were therefore punishable by the god of the State, and were regarded as his abomination. We learn from an inscription that in Sidon grave-opening was an abomination to Ashtoreth; and there is a curious set of South Arabian inscriptions in which persons guilty of certain forms of uncleanness have to apologise to the gods in public.

Of the existence of codes supposed to emanate from these Semitic divinities we have at present little evidence. Yet analogy makes it certain that so important a part of the kingly duty as the administration of justice could not be done without divine authorisation; and a king claims long life from his goddess on the ground of his justice. The gods, moreover, everywhere served as witnesses to oaths, whether in treaties or in matters of internal commerce; and it is probable that such institutions as the law of *talio* and blood-money were everywhere divine ordinances. It is likely, however, that the chief concern of the gods was with the worshipper's *food*; in Assyrian tablets the danger of eating improper food seems more present to the mind of the devotee than any other; and in the expiatory tablets referred to it is physical rather than moral uncleanness which offends the deities.

We have already seen that certain forms of immorality were not only countenanced, but even enjoined, by many Semitic cults, and that in many other matters the morality of the religion was apt to be far behind that of the communities at the time of their progress and prosperity. We have little evidence to connect the greater number of the Semitic gods with lofty ideas of justice or morality. The services with which they are credited in the inscriptions which we possess are invariably of a material order, while their failing to give the desired assistance is accounted for on the ground of their privileges being neglected. The worship of goddesses, which was ordinarily popular, was not only associated with indifferent morality, but also, being based on current theories of female nature, led to an assumption of moral and intellectual weakness in the deity which barred the progress of lofty notions. Of missions that could be compared with those of the Hebrew prophets we have no records; and when Mohammed abolished the idolatry of Arabia it would appear that the morality which he introduced was regarded as that already current in the better class of society, but not as that which the old gods had authorised. The character of that morality naturally differed widely, according to the state of each community; in nomad tribes there was little idea of rights connected with property, and the regard for human life was restrained within narrow limits. In stationary societies, on the other hand, the institution of private property and

the need for security of life soon made themselves felt. But although the gods were supposed to take part in the quarrels of the community and of the individual, we have little reason for supposing that they were credited with the will and the power to judge aright, and to side with the good.

Worship consisted in gratifying their tastes, and theories as to these survived ordinarily from times when moral ideas had been but little developed. Where any myths were attached to them it is probable that their record was no better than that of the Greek gods; and in any case the notions associated with them were rather those of waywardness and pettiness than of justice and integrity. The idea also that the worshipper possessed some power over the god, which he could exercise by ill-treating the image, existed in many States. The process of nailing an image to its place was employed to prevent its deserting to the enemy. We read also of the images being flogged when the gods failed to do what was desired. Punishment of the gods by reducing their rations was also occasionally employed. A legend records how a Bedouin broke a stone god because it had frightened his camels.

Of the place of women in the smaller Semitic States we have few records. In Saba and other South Arabian communities they sometimes figure as chieftains and owners of castles, and in inscriptions make handsome offerings to the gods. There is little reason to doubt that monogamy was usual in

these communities, though not invariably practised. The name for fellow-wife goes back to remote antiquity, and even late Jewish codes regard polygamy as a moral state; but a variety of practical difficulties stand in the way of the custom in settled societies. There is evidence in Phœnician communities of the practice of marriage between near relations, such as the Jewish law would have forbidden; and evidence, in Arabian communities, of the retention of the father's wives by the son, a practice countenanced by Greek tradition, but disapproved by Jewish law. The results of the system of slavery were invariably such as to degrade sexual morality, and in this matter the Semitic communities were probably on a level with the Mohammedan States of recent times.

Of the virtues produced by the religious systems we can therefore say little, but it is probable that the ideas of any Semitic society on the subject of conduct would have differed exceedingly from those of modern Europe, and that the gods would have had little connection with any points on which the two were agreed. While religion served as a substitute for nearly all forms of knowledge, acts were naturally estimated by their supposed consequences; and those acts which would alienate the god or bring down his vengeance on the community would be prohibited by graver and ever graver sanctions. Of the series of reformers by whom the false premises were refuted, we have no record in any case save

that of the Hebrews; yet these wrong notions require for their abolition the activity of enlightened minds, and even so die hard.

10. Future Life.—Religion does not seem ordinarily with the Semites to have been a preparation for a future life, and the inscriptions are rare which suggest any idea of it. Some which show definite Egyptian influence are naturally excluded from consideration. The grave is described as an eternal resting-place. In many communities steps are taken to ensure that the remains of the deceased shall not be disturbed. The graves are hewn where possible out of the solid rock; solemn injunctions are laid on the representatives of the deceased never to part with the tomb or admit strangers; and the help of both gods and magistrates is besought to secure their remaining undisturbed. Anxiety to remain in the neighbourhood of the resting-place of departed relations is often expressed; and nomad communities appear to have carried the remains of important persons when they migrated. The body was thought to join a community below the earth called in some places "Refaim"; and its happiness was thought to consist in repose.

Immortality consisted in leaving offspring, whence childlessness is the most grievous imprecation that can be uttered; in some cases, however, a monument might serve instead, whence we read in certain inscriptions that the authors had erected the pillars to themselves in their lifetimes. The Aramaic use

of the word "Soul" for monument seems connected with this class of ideas, though the connection cannot easily be analysed. That the body was often thought to retain some kind of sensation after death seems likely. This agrees with the practice of burying treasure with the corpse, leading to the asseveration on some tombs that there is no treasure inside, and also to the prayer that graves might be watered, based on the supposition that water was as necessary to the dead as to the living; the provision of food for the dead which appears to have been a practice of post-exilian Jews was probably Persian rather than Semitic. Of the doctrine of the ghost we get some traces in Arabic superstitions; with the Arabs it was thought at any rate in some cases to take the form of a bird which hovered over the grave.

The Assyrians probably had a more vivid account of the lower world than the other Semites. In the *Descent of Ishtar* it is described mythologically as a place where there is no light, where dust serves for food, and whence the traveller returns not. It is guarded by a porter, and is the permanent residence of certain gods. The idea that the gods of the upper world have no business down below seems to be the fundamental idea of that story. In the Arabic mythology a god of the lower world named Sha'ub was recognised, and meeting with this deity is an expression for dying. In the Phœnician inscription of King Eshmunazar he prays that those who violate his tomb may after death be delivered

over to a tyrant who shall deal fiercely with them.

The idea of a "glorious resurrection" seems to have been quite unfamilar to the Semitic races, and the Koran repeatedly records the ridicule with which the notion was received by the Arab pagans. Hence the worship of heroes seems to have been exceedingly rare; and even the salutation "Hail" which is found in some inscriptions appears to be in imitation of Greek usage. When the Phœnician gods and goddesses were identified by the learned with those of Greece, the theory that they were heroes and heroines came in vogue, but it was rarely grounded in Semitic beliefs. The gods were, indeed, like men, but death was not a means by which the latter were transferred into the former's society.

The want of any notion of a future life among the Semitic peoples probably facilitated the introduction of those cults in which great importance was attached to it, especially the Egyptian religion. The material at our disposal does not enable us to say whether burial was ever or often regarded as a religious service; in one inscription there may perhaps be a reference to the consecration of a tomb; but of any mystical connection between rites performed over a man's corpse and its future destiny the material at our disposal does not furnish any evidence. The ordinary treatment of a corpse, whether cremation or sepulture, doubtless was regarded as the proper treatment, to be deprived of which constituted an indignity.

CHAPTER III.

THE RELIGION OF EGYPT.

1. **Sources.**—The sources of our knowledge of the religion of Egypt are original documents on stone, wood and papyrus, of which many have been transferred to European collections, while many still remain near their original homes. The period covered by these monuments is very long—scarcely less than 4,000 years. During that period the political condition of Egypt and also its religions underwent the changes which even in conservative countries the ages naturally bring; but some characteristic institutions and beliefs seem to have existed from the earliest period to the introduction of Christianity, while in other cases the new growth did not altogether oust the pre-existing material, but allowed it to continue. The key to the interpretation of these monuments was discovered early in the nineteenth century by Champollion, whose ideas have been developed by a long series of workers. To the information which they provide valuable supplements are furnished by Greek writers whose notices of Egyptian religion were collected and utilised by Sir

Gardiner Wilkinson in his classical work on the ancient civilisation of Egypt. References to the religion of Egypt are rare in the Old Testament; but from Jeremiah (xlvi. 25) we learn the name of one Egyptian god (Amon or Amen), and it has been conjectured that Isaiah x. 4 contains the name of Osiris; while the name of the priest of On, the patron of Joseph, contains the name of the sun god, Ra (Potipe-Ra). Casual notices tell us of the Egyptians' polytheism, of their animal worship (Exodus viii. 26), of their exclusiveness and of their addiction to the practice of magic. Allusions also occur to the practice of embalming (Gen. l.), which was of course a religious rite. Still the total absence of reference to the most characteristic doctrine of the Egyptians cannot be accidental.

2. The Mummy.—More than any other ancient people the Egyptians were concerned with the state of man after death. That concern is illustrated by the Pyramids, which among the tombs of all ages and countries take the first place for permanence and magnificence. It is illustrated by the embalming process, producing the mummy, an institution characteristic of ancient Egypt. It is illustrated in the third place by the quantity of Egyptian literature which is connected either with funeral rites or with matter bearing on the state of the deceased.

A mummy was made by removing from the body those internal organs the preservation of which was specially difficult, and saturating the whole with

natron,[1] while powerful aromatic drugs were introduced within. The body was then swathed with bands of linen daubed with gum, and, in the case of the wealthy, placed in a coffin. The Egyptian treatment rendered the body capable of remaining intact for an unlimited period, even 5,000 years. The ground for the endeavour to preserve it must clearly have been the supposition that the body after death was not wholly devoid of sensation, but continued to feel and enjoy. He therefore who invented a plan by which it could be saved from decay was probably regarded as a benefactor to the race—somewhat as we regard the inventor of a prophylactic against any ordinary disease. The house that was built for the dead man was then (where such could be afforded) of solidity and permanence suited to the length of time in which the corpse was expected to remain the same. The chamber in which it was lodged was rendered as inaccessible as possible, so that the dead man might not be disturbed. In ante-chambers, however, places were provided where his statue could be set, and where offerings to him could be made. Provision was then made for his comfort on the supposition that the dead man's wants were similar to the wants of the living.

One of the most eminent of Egyptian experts

[1] *I.e.*, "a mixture of carbonate, sulphate and muriate of soda" (Budge, *The Mummy* (1893), p. 183). This work contains a full account of the processes employed and their results. Salt and bitumen were also used.

has suggested that the word "conservatism" is that which best describes the Egyptian habit of mind. In progressive communities the new knowledge causes the old error to be banished; in Egypt old errors were rarely banished. A mode was found of adapting the new knowledge to the old theory. The idea that the sensation of the body did not terminate with death, leading to the discovery of expedients for preserving it against the worm, must belong to the infancy of the human race; but the discovery that this was an error seems not to have affected Egyptian practice. It was indeed perceived that the dead man could not enjoy, because he had no longer some of the instruments of enjoyment, or could not use them if he had. Means were therefore devised to restore the use of them to him. We possess a whole liturgy of which the avowed object is to open the mouth and eyes of the deceased. This operation was not, however, performed on the corpse, but on the coffin, or on an image of the deceased which served vicariously. With the aid of an adze and a chisel the mouth and eyes were opened. With the aid of pigment the red colour was (in theory) restored to the lips. Teeth of a sort were provided, and food introduced, or a feint of introducing it made.

These ceremonies imply the belief, or at least the fancy, that the functions of life could be restored to the corpse by an operation. They continued in use when the conviction that this could not be done in the literal sense had become universal among those who

thought. They also illustrated (whether they began or not) the *magical* theory by which what you do to a man's substitute you do to himself. But presently the difficulties involved opened the way to speculation. Since, after all, the body did not enjoy what was given it, it was assumed that something else did. Besides the body, then, there must exist a double, which, though ordinarily invisible, for many purposes might serve as a substitute for the body. This double (called Ka) was thought of probably as the reflection of the man, such as appears in water or on a polished surface. The process of embalming was now explained as the preservation of the Ka, and the presence of images in the tomb was in order that, in the event of the mummy after all perishing, the Ka might still have something on which it might support itself. The greater the number of the images the better the chance. The Ka, though scarcely material, was still supposed to consume material food, though after a time representations of food presented were thought to serve the same purpose, or, indeed, prayers that it might be fed were regarded as sufficient to ensure that its wants would be supplied. Or, finally, it was thought that the gods would be able to feed it, and that by supplying them with food there was a prospect of their being willing to spare some of it for the Ka.

Soon came the difficulty that the tomb was a gloomy home for the Ka, and a doctrine came into existence promising it a brighter and fresher abode.

The dead under certain conditions were supposed to migrate somewhere else. At first their Elysium was placed on earth, in some region difficult of access. The fields of Yalu, the Egyptian Paradise, were first placed in the Delta between two of the Nile mouths. When this country became known, it was placed farther and farther away. Means, however, had to be devised for giving the dead power to leave their tombs and travel thither. This was done by the celebrated Book of the Dead which was deposited with them. It contained the spells by which they could effect this process.

Finally, the earth was no longer regarded as a fitting abode for the dead, and their Elysium was transferred to the sky. This they were to scale as other places are scaled, and in some tombs ladders are provided for the purpose. This naïve notion was replaced by the theory that the soul was a bird, whose wings would carry it upward. But during the process of evolution of these theories the human being had come to be analysed into a great variety of constituents, his shadow and his name, his double, his soul and his spiritual body, etc.

Of the state of the souls after death there were successive theories. At one time it was supposed that they would be engaged in agriculture, only the soil they were to till would be more fertile and the crops taller than those which they had produced on earth. When the idea of manual labour continued after death became wanting in attractiveness, the

slaves of the wealthy were embalmed with them in order to discharge the duty in their stead; and presently for these there were buried figures called "answerers" which would serve as substitutes. In one of the books on the future state, it appears that some souls were to be left by the sun as colonists in the region which he traversed in his boat; whereas those who were in possession of the most forcible spells would continue in the sun's boat and accompany him always. With the state of those who failed to pass the test at the judgment of Osiris, or on whose bodies the proper rites had not been performed, speculation seems to have been but little concerned.

We have constantly to remember in studying the history of human beliefs that what is invented for one reason is preserved for another. When the doctrine of a soul flying to heaven after leaving the body had been recognised, what further use was there for the elaborate process of embalming, and the variety of rites and ceremonies which apparently assumed that the body was the man? What further use for the tomb-builder, or for the priest whose business it was to convey food to the dead man? Whole professions, however, do not allow themselves to be abolished by logic. It was discovered that the embalming process and the accompanying ceremonies were the means by which immortality and paradise could be secured. And for this doctrine a mythical reason was given. The process was an imitation of

an ancient experiment: Osiris had been killed (perhaps at one time death implied killing), and for him immortality had been secured by the process of putting his limbs together and embalming them. At one time the body seems before embalming to have been broken and afterwards pieced together, in order to make the correspondence more exact; but this mythical explanation of the process served to harmonise it with advancing beliefs. The dead man was to regard himself as Osiris: but also Osiris was the god of the dead, and the judge of the dead (we have in dealing with eschatology to be prepared for mistiness and vagueness).

3. Animal Worship.—The Egyptian theology as it dealt with gods shows traces of the same principle—the retention of views belonging to a number of different periods. The ancients were struck by one fact about the Egyptian worship—the tenant of the shrine was a living animal—the worship of the bulls Apis at Memphis and Mnevis at On (Anu or Heliopolis) were the most famous of these cults; but similar honours were paid at different places to a variety of animals—the lion, ram, crocodile, cat, swallow, snake, etc. In some of these cases (as in that of Apis and Mnevis) divine honours were paid to individuals of the species, recognised by certain signs, and therefore (at any rate at some time) regarded as the embodiment of a deity. These individuals when recognised were trained to a certain extent, lodged in temples, where they were

maintained in luxury, and received homage and admiration; they were called on for aid, and even administered oracles. In other cases a whole species was regarded as inviolable, and ill-treatment of any member of it severely punished. In both classes of cases the animals so worshipped received elaborate burial. The different regions of Egypt varied considerably as to the animals to which they assigned divine honours; and this difference was sometimes (it is said) a cause for war and bloodshed.

There is little reason for distinguishing the Egyptian worship of animals from other cases of zoolatry. It dates from a time in which man regarded other animals as his equals or superiors, and when the meaning of "kinds" existing in nature was not understood.

The widespread phenomenon of totemism, as illustrated by the researches of Frazer and others, gives us at any rate the origin of the Egyptian practice. A tribe or clan is supposed to be connected with some animal (in rare cases with an inanimate object), and puts itself into relation with the species, or some member of it. The clan abstain, as a rule, from the flesh of the animal which they regard as their totem, and even punish ill-treatment of it. Often they mark their bodies with rude representations of the totem animal, or mutilate their persons in such a way as to produce some resemblance thereto. The practice often is accompanied with the belief that the ancestor or ancestress of the clan was a member of the totem

species. Totems belong not only to clans, but even to individuals and sexes; and in each case the totem animal is the object of respect, and is treated as an ally.

That the animals worshipped in Egypt were in origin the totems of tribes need not be doubted. But even at the earliest period to which the history of Egyptian civilisation can be traced it seems certain that the cult of animals was no longer quite naïve. At a later time the priests could show a great number of reasons for it. Thus the people were taught to regard an animal as sacred, because, being useful, it was important that it should be preserved, or because the species suggested the practice of some particular virtue. And indeed quite modern writers have credited the Egyptian priests with an occult wisdom which they concealed from the masses. The only truth that this view can have may be that in the priestly colleges speculation was rife on the purpose of existing practices; but such reasons as the priests could allege would not have been the ground for the custom but an apology for it.

4. Gods of Egypt.—Egypt was divided into forty-two (or more) nomes or departments which were said to have had originally an independent existence. Afterwards they were merged into two kingdoms, and at the commencement of Egyptian history into one. Each of these had in historical times its own chief god; in some cases two or more nomes worshipped the same. The god had his temple in the

chief city of the nome, where there was a college of priests to look after his comfort. That these gods were originally the totems of the tribes is likely; but we can trace on the one hand a process by which the god became separated from the totem, and on the other hand an attempt to identify the god with something otherwise known and familiar. The representation of many of the gods was with human bodies, but heads of animals. Where an individual animal was worshipped, it was thought to be an incarnation of a god, *i.e.*, in theory the bull was not worshipped *qua* bull, but as an incarnation of the god Ptah. Where a species received homage, it was explained that such a species was the favourite of some god. It was also held that the real reason for the worship of animals was that at one time the gods had thus to disguise themselves when visiting the earth, for fear of suffering oppression had they displayed their real forms.

The union of the nomes into a nation led to the migration of deities from one nome to another, and to a tendency to exalt the god of the nome that provided the King of Egypt at the expense of the local gods. Thus we get the association of a variety of gods in the temples of each, the chief god having his contemplar deities. From the time of this community of deities we may trace the commencement of speculation that led to important results.

The names of the gods were interpreted as meaning natural objects. Thus Osiris was said to mean

the Nile. What or who he was originally will perhaps never be known; he figures in a variety of capacities. Frazer has made it probable that he was originally a corn god, or at any rate that his mythical history is derived from practices which imply such a deity. According to some he is the first man, according to many the ideal man; at one period he was identified with the sun; his identification with the Nile is probably as much an afterthought as any of these. All the gods of his circle, *i.e.*, all the persons who entered into his story, when that had been brought into shape, were gods of nomes; it may be that the authors of the story were consciously turning the language of metaphor into commonplace history, or that fragments of real history were adapted to the names provided by these nomic gods. The Nile being divided into a number of mouths might perhaps suggest that the body of Osiris had been cut in pieces; however that may be, the story, in the form which it reached at the earliest known period of Egyptian history, appears to have known of an Osiris with a brother Set who murdered him, and sisters Isis and Nephthys who rendered him immortal; of a son Horus who avenged his murder on Set; and of a jackal-headed Anubis who helped in these proceedings. The chief seat of the worship of Osiris was Abydos; and the supposition that his head had been buried there probably was suggested by this.

Osiris was sometimes represented by a ram, sometimes by a leafless tree, but ordinarily as a man, and,

indeed, as a mummy, except that his arms are free. This representation accords with the theory that he was the first who died, and also the first who, by being embalmed, secured immortality. Those who inquired further into his history discovered that he was a king, and, indeed, a virtuous king; naturally the country over which he ruled was Egypt. The story of his fate, as told by Plutarch, need not be repeated here; it has often been translated and commented upon. Traits common to many fables are found in it: the enmity between brothers, the affection of a wife being stronger than death, the son who avenges his father; not a little of the coarseness that characterises old mythology is revealed in some forms of it also. The resourcefulness of mythology is also shown in the discovery of parts for the individual actors. When the doctrine of an after life sprang up in some such manner as that sketched above, the poets had to assign these characters parts in that new world: Osiris was naturally made its chief god; the *rôles* of the others were assigned with such ingenuity as the poets or artists could employ.

It is remarkable that in the funeral rites every corpse played the part of Osiris. At times, indeed, the Osiris was regarded as a part of the personality, similar to the "double," the soul, the shadow, the name, etc., into which the Egyptian psychology divided the man. Perhaps the theory that the gods could be easily deceived was at work here. Where totems are still reverenced evil powers are some-

times quelled by dressing the child as the clan totem, or making it sham some process connected with the totem animal. By pretending to be Osiris a man might perhaps secure for himself the privileges which that hero had enjoyed. At a late period of Egyptian history Osiris had become the national god, his cult taking precedence of all the others. This probably took place after the national independence had been finally lost, when the god who enters most into the private life of each individual has an advantage over those worshipped by a conquering State. The wailing for his death constituted the national fast. This was associated by some with the burying of the seed in the ground, by others with the weakening of the sun, whence his death day was sometimes dated as the shortest day in the year.

We suppose then that Egyptian polytheism is partly produced by accident, partly by conscious speculation. Researches into totemism have shown that the choice of a totem animal is often accidental; there are communities in which a man's future guide is revealed to him in a dream, or is the animal which happens to remain when the pictures of others have been rubbed out at the time of his birth. Frazer regards the totem as in origin the place where a man keeps his soul. The processes by which the animal becomes the embodiment of a god, by which a god increases in power and sublimity, and by which a god is thought of in human form, are familiar in many civilised communities. When a number of tribes pos-

sessing deities are formed into a peaceful fraternity, their deities can either be identified or they can be ranged in some sort of order and made members of some sort of family. The original respect paid to an animal may have been due to the theory that it contained a man's soul, or that each member of the tribe was represented by one member of the species; and this respect would be perpetuated, though reasons according with the progress of education would have to be devised to account for it. The practices which originated in various ways would ordinarily provide the material for speculation on the nature of the person to whom the ceremony was referred; but the individual acts of combination, of identification of different persons, of interpretation of different customs are rarely preserved. We may be sure that the persons who hit upon them and persuaded others of their correctness were highly gratified thereby.

Brugsch thought the process took ordinarily one of three directions: the euhemeristic process, which makes of the god a historical character, and interprets supernatural stories connected with him as commonplace events coloured by metaphorical language, or in some way or other misunderstood; the moralising process, in which the actors are supposed to be models of the way in which men should act, as, *e.g.*, Isis, regarded as the model spouse, or Horus as the model son; and the cosmological process, in which the figures are thought to stand

for portions of the universe, and the acts ascribed to them to be figurative expressions for the processes of nature. None of these processes is either new or unfamiliar; and with the aid of one or other of the three the problem of reducing a set of totems to a highly organised theological system could in time be accomplished. The euhemeristic process, which is often associated with irreverence and rationalism, is less liable to that reproach when a god is thought of as only superior to man in a small degree, and when there is no known objection to making him act as man acts. If, therefore, we should admire the wisdom of the Egyptian priests, this should be less for their hitting on obvious ways of building up a theology than for their permitting the religion to make real progress with but little violation to the feelings of the devotees. For it is the retention of the practice about which men are ordinarily susceptible, whereas the explanation of the practice may be left to those who have leisure to concern themselves with abstruse questions. So long, therefore, as the advance of philosophy did not interfere with the reverence paid to bulls, cats, crocodiles, hawks, etc., we may well believe that the greater part of the Egyptian nation cared little whether their religion was pantheism, or polytheism, or monotheism. A break in the custom would have been felt, whereas a change in the theory would have affected only a few. That the Egyptian religion had its epochs of war and tumult seems likely; but

the course followed by the priests would appear to have rendered such occasions uncommon.

5. The Sun God.—One suggestion for the meaning of the names of the gods was, as has been seen, astronomical and cosmological. That which identified the gods with the sun seems to have found favour from an early time. The sun (Ra) may perhaps have been a tribal totem; as such he is still in use. When a god was separated from an animal, and regarded as a source of profit and loss, the theory that the sun was what was meant had great plausibility, especially in a country which gives such striking evidence of the power of the sun to affect both. Coupled with a god Amen, chief deity of Thebes, he became the chief god of Egypt at the time of the Theban dynasties, and especially when, owing to the expulsion of the Hyksos, his worshippers were in special favour. His symbol was often the sparrow-hawk, a bird that had probably been the totem of some tribe, which underwent the process of enlightenment that has been sketched. Hymns to Amen-Ra are preserved, in which the god's praises are sung, and in which the glory of the sun is poetically described. The language used in these hymns has suggested the idea that their authors were monotheists. So thoroughly do they associate with his name the attributes of an Almighty Creator. With the progress of Egyptian history it appears to have become natural to explain each god as meaning the sun—thus the crocodile Sebek and Osiris (in spite of

his association with death) were both at one time so explained. His worship was for a time suspended by the King Amen-Hotep IV., who substituted for it the worship of the sun's disc (called Aten, after which the king renamed himself), but was reinstated afterwards. So serious was this reform that this king abandoned the capital, Thebes, with which the worship of Amen-Ra was particularly associated, to found a new capital.

The worship of the sun led to some geographical speculation. Since travelling was usually done by boat, the sun was supposed to perform his journey in a boat, or series of boats, built like those in use on the Nile. This boat went on a heavenly river, which, according to some, flowed over a heaven of iron. The fancy of poets provided him with companions, and the book *Am-Duat* depicted his journey during the night. Each hour was devoted to a separate region; in these regions the sun, like a Pharaoh, deposited some of his faithful followers, to serve as colonists for the maintenance of his power. But according to some accounts each day a new sun was born—in a lotus-flower, perhaps because the birth of fire from water was only possible with the aid of some intermediary.

The euhemeristic explanation also worked on the theory that the sun was not itself god, but was the instrument or home of a god. Myths concerning Ra were told, not differing in style from those told of Osiris, and, indeed, bringing in some of the same

characters. Ra, like Osiris, had at one time reigned on earth ; he had been wounded, and Isis had healed him, on condition, however, of learning his mysterious name. He had left the earth out of disgust, to take up his residence in the sun. He had desired to destroy the whole of the human race, but had been induced to let them remain.

Finally, the worship of the sun was brought into the doctrine of immortality. The setting of the sun in the west and his rising in the east offered an obvious analogy to the fate of the human being—accentuated by the fact that the cities of the dead were west of the Nile, whereas the cities of the living were mostly on the east. The hours of night were in part identified with, in part regarded as analogous to, the period after death.

Moon and star worship are also represented in the Egyptian religion, it would seem, rather as theories of the nature of gods already known than as an independent religious system. The stars were, indeed, thought to be lamps suspended from the sky. In some of the representations the cord by which they hang can easily be traced. Hence the doctrine which connected Isis and Osiris with stars was probably a case of theological speculation. In the identification of Isis with the moon such speculation can be traced with ease ; owing to the connection of the month with feminine matters there is a pretty common tendency to make all goddesses moon goddesses. In the character of moon goddess Isis was

represented with horns, and a fable that when her head had been removed a cow's head was substituted accounted for the change. The goddess who had a better right to the cow's head was Hathor of Denderah.

Theological speculation further grouped the gods and goddesses in sets, somewhat as the Greek and Roman theologians grouped theirs. A common scheme gave triads—a god, a goddess, and their son; the last, as the reproduction of his father, counted as the husband of his mother. Of the ennead, or group of nine, Maspero has given an ingenious analysis. It was based on cosmological speculation. Its figures included an abyss in which the heaven and earth had originally lain; a power that sundered them, probably the air; man, as the son of heaven and earth, and, since man dies, some one to kill him (Set); and wives for all the males. This was the ennead of the theologians of On, in which the chief god was a creator, Atoum. As other States adopted the idea of the ennead they substituted for Atoum the god they held in highest honour; at Memphis the place was given to Ptah, at Thebes to Amen, at Sais to Neith, at Denderah to Hathor. At Hermopolis the chief deity was Thoth, originally an ape totem; he, however, was thought not to generate, or make, as other gods, but to create by the power of the voice. There was then in this ennead no room for other actors, and the eight remaining gods were thought to be the four pillars that support the sky at its four corners, with

a goddess as a mate for each, her name being grammatically formed from that of the god. These eight gods were thought of as one god, the Eight, and perhaps gave rise to the deity Eshmun, whom we have met with as a Phœnician god.

The account then given of the origin of the heavens and the earth was not dissimilar to that given, say, by Hesiod, in treating the bodies discussed as human beings, and making them parents after the style of human parentage. The doctrine of an abyss which contained the germs of life and action before any evolution is also common to many systems. These speculations on the origin of things constantly confuse metaphorical language with literal language in order to get history where there is none. Whether the names that figure in the cosmogony—Nun, the abyss; Shu, the air; Nuit, the heaven; Sibu, the earth—existed before the myth or not seems uncertain; some of the names (*e.g.*, Tafnut, the goddess who sometimes figures as the wife of Shu) seem to owe their origin to etymological necessity. A gap is discovered in the system, and a name invented to fill it. In the triad system (as in the ennead of Hermopolis) this method of adding to the Pantheon is very apparent. Further, when the theory that the number of the gods was nine had gained wide acceptance, the theologians were at times careless about the mode in which the number was filled up, or, indeed, whether exactly nine, etc., were constituted by the gods reckoned to it. Most of these groups contain deities

that are evidently factitious, *i.e.*, names invented by etymological or other considerations to adjust the figures.

6. Other Deities.—The history of the Egyptian gods is, therefore, one of extreme complication, owing to the length of time during which speculation was added to speculation, and theories naturally inconsistent were in some way or other harmonised. Most of the gods were represented by figures only partly human; usually the body was human, but the head that of a bird, a beast or a reptile. As a means of distinguishing different gods they were assigned a variety of functions. The god Thoth, of Hermopolis, represented with an ibis's head, was thus made the secretary of the gods; writing was supposed to be his invention; at the final judgment he acted as recorder. In some places the native cult recognised a god of the living as well as a god of the dead; and the goddesses everywhere had charge of matters specially affecting females. Ptah was supposed to look after the smelter's art, Chnum after the potter's. Probably the art assigned to the god was that which was practised by the tribe with whom he counted as the chief object of adoration; when the theologians combined the gods in a community these functions would be assigned to them with justice. At an early period evil-doing gods as well as well-doing gods were worshipped. Hence Set, identified with the power of mischief, had his devotees; he was, however, thought to be the chief god of the foreign

Hyksos, and after their expulsion was regarded with horror, and his worship gradually ceased. The worship of the crocodile was similarly confined to a few States; and indeed the god who was identified with the crocodile was assigned by no means a malevolent part in the mythology: he was supposed to have aided Horus in his fight with Set, and to have restored to the dead Osiris the use of his eyes and mouth. His home was supposed to be the mountain Bak, which forms the stay of heaven towards the east. He opened the gates of the East to the new-born sun god, with whom he at one time was identified. In his case clearly we have a naïve worship of the crocodile, tempered down by speculation till the original character of the worship is absolutely concealed.

Horus is the name for two gods distinguished by most Egyptologists. One of these, the son of Osiris and Isis, was the avenger of his father, and helped to secure him immortality. This god's introduction to the Pantheon may have been due to mythological necessity. The other was thought to share the world with Set, with whom he at times actually shared a temple. He was armed with iron, the metal which was supposed to fall from heaven, and accompanied by smiths, who forged his weapons, though they did not help him to fight. They were represented on earth by a college or corporation of smiths, who had to look after the god's temple. His seat was at Edfu. At times identified with the sun god, he was

called the son or the soul of Ra, and represented by his symbol, the sparrow-hawk.

Hapi, the Nile god, was at times, as we have seen, identified with Osiris, and was represented as a man with female breasts, bearing gifts in his hands and a lotus on his head. His worship was naturally common throughout Egypt.

From the time of the unification of Egypt the tendency towards having a national god displayed itself, and at first Amen-Ra was so regarded, but in later times Osiris. The need for a being in some aspects man and in some god was satisfied by this conception in the form in which Egyptian theology worked it out, and (according to Dr. Budge) prepared Egypt for Christianity as no other country was prepared for it. The group that grew up round Osiris consisted, as we have seen, of persons represented at the funeral ceremonies—persons whose part in that most memorable history had been of high importance, and whose assistance was required by each person who hoped to reach the world beyond the grave. As the details of the transformation scene were worked out, the worship of Osiris had both a spiritualising and a moralising value. Conducted before Osiris, the dead man would have to give an account of his works, would have to answer truly a negative catechism, in which sins were enumerated of which he would have to declare himself innocent, after which his heart would be weighed that it might be seen if he had spoken truly. Although means were devised to silence

accusers at that trial scene, and knowledge of the names of the judges would itself be something in the way of preparation, the promise of a judgment after death was without doubt a discovery of high importance for stimulating the moral sense. With the tendency of Egyptian theology to occupy itself more and more with the world beyond the grave, Osiris came to occupy men's minds more than all other deities. In him the great secret of overcoming death had been solved.

The nature of the Egyptian Pantheon was by no means such as to prevent the admixture of foreign cults. The great variety of the Egyptian deities on the one hand offered the means of easy identification for most foreign gods ; and ordinarily the Egyptians had more to tell foreigners about them than they could learn from them. Certain foreign names, such as those of Reshef and Ashtoreth, are found occasionally in later times in the Egyptian Pantheon : and certain other deities are thought by experts to have been borrowed from Nubians. Of the deification of individual men there are probably few traces, except that the king was *ex officio* an impersonation of a god ; he was regarded as the actual and not merely the nominal son of Ra. The fact, moreover, that the Egyptian god could sicken and die like a man rendered euhemeristic explanations of the origin of the gods comparatively easy. The dynasty of gods was supposed to have reigned on earth before the dynasties of men. Osiris himself was

a beneficent King of Egypt, and his brother a traitor.

7. Festivals.—The honours paid by the Egyptians to their gods do not differ materially from those customary in other countries. The gods were housed and fed in a costly style; and the god of a department habitually admitted other gods to share his house. The regular provision of sacrifices was secured, as elsewhere, by settlements of land on temples; and where the god was represented by a living animal it was tolerably easy to discover what sort of comfort he most desired. The right of offering to a god seems in theory to have belonged to every Egyptian, though naturally the science of the due ceremonial came in time to be the exclusive possession of a hereditary priesthood. Special feasts with processions in honour of the chief gods were also common. Every year from the 8th to the 11th November the mourning for the dead Osiris was celebrated. It began with the feast of ploughing, *i.e.*, the celebration of the commencement of agricultural operations for the winter. On the fourth day Osiris was formally buried, and dirges sung by women representing Isis and Nephthys. On the fifth day there was a procession round the town, and on the last his entombment was finished. Of many other feasts connected with the stories of Isis and Osiris, and with the recurrence of astronomical phenomena and agricultural operations, we read in the works of Greek writers. Feasts were celebrated

as in most countries by concourses of people, by offerings to the gods, the burning of torches, and music. It is probable that the chief god of each department had honour of this or analogous sorts paid him at some season of the year.

The priests are declared by some writers to have constituted a caste in Egypt, as they do in India; but this statement is not free from difficulty. They appear in any case to have formed a large and important portion of the population, and to have been employed not only at the sanctuaries of the gods, but also at the tombs of the wealthier members of the community, where they had to keep up a supply of food for the dead. At the great religious centres there were colleges whose speculations marked the progress of the religion. Greek writers have much to tell of the rules by which the life of the priests was regulated, of their frequent washings and fastings, of their dress of linen or cotton, and of the roughness of their accommodation. They were without doubt the learned profession of Egypt: the Egyptian writing was probably at all times a priestly secret—the ordinary name for the two oldest forms of writing implies this. The power they obtained from this monopoly led them at ordinary times to be entrusted with judicial functions, and at times to obtain supreme power in the State. To the office of priestess women of the highest families in the country aspired.

Of the objects used in devotion the sistrum or

rattle used in the worship of Isis attracted notice in ancient times; it was generally from "eight to sixteen or eighteen inches in length and entirely of bronze or brass" (Wilkinson). Being laden with rings on movable bars, it gave a jingling noise when shaken; and it was held by women as they accompanied the priests to the altar. Theoretically its purpose was to frighten away the evil spirit; but it may have originally been employed in some agricultural operations, and thence have been introduced into or maintained in a religious ceremony.

The familiar obelisk, often dedicated to the sun, is regarded by some as having originally no religious meaning, but as a place for the name of the owner of a temple or other residence. The earliest examples appear, however, to have been erected in the sun's honour.

8. Sacred Books.—The Egyptian sacred books were not unknown to the writers of classical antiquity. Of these the most important is the Book of the Dead, which exists in a great number of recensions of varying age and content. It was the custom to deposit a portion of it with each mummy. To him it was to serve as a hand-book to the next world, each chapter containing the spells whereby he was to secure some advantage or other in the world beyond the grave. The whole work was supposed to have been composed by the god Thoth. Its compilation covered many ages, fresh chapters being continually composed, while to the matter contained

in the older texts comments and super-comments were frequently added. As a handbook of morals it is remarkable for the negative confession, or collection of forty-two crimes which the dead man must claim before the tribunal of Osiris to have avoided. The number of offences seems to have been taken from the number of nomic gods, and varies with different calculations; but the moral tone of these precepts has been deservedly praised. The dead man, before being declared innocent, must prove himself guiltless of most of the sins against his neighbour which a modern code would recognise; the distribution of offences between the moral law and the ceremonial law is very much to the advantage of the former. Violence, fraud, and in general the gratification of passions figure among the acts which this negative confession shows to have been forbidden.

The theory of a final judgment is said to go back to immemorial antiquity, and, if the ordinary Egyptian was instructed in its importance, and in the questions which he would there have to answer, its value as a moral sanction must have been considerable. The pictures in which the judgment of the dead is described introduce many accessories capable of emphasising its importance. Gods to the number of the declarations which the dead man must make are introduced. The dead man is bound to call each by his mystic name. Part of the help given him by the sacred book lay in the fact of its telling him the names of the beings whom he would

encounter. It was thought that knowledge of the name gave the dead man some sort of power of him whose name it was. The weighing of the heart of the dead man is represented as executed in the presence of a whole number of deities. There are those present to whose care were committed those parts of the body which were not fit to be embalmed with it. Even when the questions were asked and the judgment was over the difficulties were not over that the dead man would have to encounter. He was, however, pronounced "true of voice," *i.e.*, capable of pronouncing correctly the spells which would cause the doors through which he must yet pass to fly open ; in these theories no less importance was attached to the correctness with which the words of power were uttered than to the words themselves.

Much of the Book of the Dead is below the high and spiritual standard of the passages that deal with the final judgment. Knowledge of names and knowledge of the identity of one god with another seem to constitute a large portion of the saving wisdom. Many of the spells clearly belong to a period when the preservation of the body was still the end most desired, when the purpose of preserving it from the worm was still regarded as the ultimate aim of the embalming process. Some are said to go back to a yet more barbarous epoch. But the continuance of this book as the dead man's guide through so astounding a period, in spite of accretions and alterations,

must be regarded as the greatest triumph of conservatism which the history of religion can show.

Another book to which reference has been made, the Am-Duat, was buried with the priests of On, and, as we have seen, explains the course of the sun through the night, and gives the knowledge that those who went in the sun's boat might find helpful. The notion of supreme and ultimate felicity which it embodies is that of accompanying the sun for ever on his course.

Other ancient Egyptian literature contains precepts not altogether unlike those of the Wisdom literature in style. Some of these claim an almost fabulous antiquity, and the mode in which the god is spoken of in them has led to the opinion that the Egyptians at an extremely early period had risen to the conception of God as apart from the gods, and to ascribe to Him an interest in morality.

In other books of a semi-sacred character the gods are introduced as acting somewhat as they act in the Indian drama or the old Greek tales. They constitute a community existing by the side of the human community with somewhat greater powers, but also with great limitations. In the hymns which ascribe to each god universal power we must, therefore, see in part the flattery of devotees, in part the result of the difficulty of predicating anything definite about imaginary beings.

9. Mysticism. — The Egyptians interested the classical nations of antiquity partly on account of

the enormous antiquity which the former with justice claimed for their civilisation, in part because of the elaborate development which their religious system had attained. It is probable that an Egyptian lived in a more mystic atmosphere than that which environed any other ancient race, and that their leading doctrine of the resurrection of the dead greatly influenced their lives. It is clear that the period of religious speculation which in Greece began in the fifth century B.C. had in Egypt commenced untold centuries before; and even if the Egyptian studies produced nothing to compare in value with the results of Greek philosophy, it is not unnatural that the former should regard the latter as beginners. That the Israelites should have taken away from Egypt nothing but the memory of wrong, when the classical nations learnt so much from cursory visits, is remarkable; but history seems to show that it is only where there is a liberal measure of religious and political toleration that the Israelites are willing to learn from their patrons.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RELIGION OF PERSIA.

1. Zoroaster.—The Old Testament makes but few allusions to the religion of Persia, but it implies that Persian kings, though not themselves acquainted with the true God, still were pleased to pay reverence to the seat of His worship. Their own religion would appear to have originated not in Persia, but in Media, and to have been adopted by the Persians, perhaps after their acquisition of the latter country. It resembled the religion of the Jews in some striking features, which will appear as we proceed. Like the religion of Moses, it was based on a revelation. The chief god was supposed to have revealed his will to a prophet, Zarathustra or Zoroaster. Authorities are divided on the question whether this person belongs to the region of myth or history. Those who take the latter view suppose him to have lived at least some centuries before the first millennium B.C. Many places claim to be his birthplace, and of these Rai, or Ragha, has the best right so far as antiquity is concerned.

In the sacred books (which are the only source of information that can be used for this question) Zoro-

aster varies from the *rôle* of a struggling hero to that of a demi-god. In the former part he appears as an ally of a king, Vishtaspa, with helpers and enemies whom he occasionally names. His political enemies are identified with the cause of the gods, whose worship he endeavours to suppress; and his career appears to involve some bloodshed. But in many parts of these books the place assigned him is far more exalted than that of hero and reformer. He is called "the first who thought what was good, spoke what was good, and did what was good; the first Priest, the first Warrior, the first Plougher of the ground; the first who knew and the first who taught; the first who possessed and took possession of the Word; the first who in the material world pronounced the praise of Asha (divine order)". In some of the hymns the *rôle* assigned him is very similar to that of an ordinary god; like them by sacrifice he procures extraordinary powers. At his birth and growth the waters and the plants rejoiced; and all the creatures of the good creation cried out, Hail! He was placed above men as Sirius is placed above the stars. From the first he was brought into contact with the power of evil, always to overcome it successfully. The latter endeavoured to kill him at his birth. Presently he appears to have challenged Zoroaster to a contest of riddles, which Zoroaster succeeded in answering. Finally, he tempted Zoroaster by offering him a reign of a thousand years. These experiences led the hero to seek from the good power permanent aid

against the evil. And this led to the revelation of the Mazdean books. In some parts of these Zoroaster is represented as instructing his king; but more often he is himself obtaining instruction from his god.

2. Sacred Books. — The sacred books of the Zoroastrians are said to have been at one time very numerous, but to have been reduced by wanton destruction at the time of Alexander the Great, and afterwards by the Mohammedan conquerors of Iran. Originally, Zoroaster's revelation filled twenty-one nosks, or books, of which only one remains entire. The existing collection consists of five parts, called respectively the Vendidad, Vispered, Yasna, Small Avesta, and Yashts. There can be no question that they embody materials dating from very different periods, and even representing very different theological opinions. The first of these is a collection of laws, stories, and spells, or prescriptions, for the treatment of a variety of evils. The leading idea of the whole is the doctrine of cleanness. The remaining books are liturgical in character, being partly prayers and partly hymns. The second and third are sacrificial litanies. In the third are included some hymns called Gathas which even some modern authorities are inclined to attribute to Zoroaster himself. These amid much prayer and thanksgiving recount the struggles to which allusion has been made, and the author's hopes and fears. It is from them that those who believe Zoroaster to have been a historical personage judge of his

character, his mental insight and his style. One of them is thought to be a poem on the occasion of the marriage of Zoroaster's daughter. In others friends and foes are freely named. Something is said in them of the history of creation, and the author's doctrines are frequently explained. The style is everywhere disjointed and supposed to exhibit an unexampled degree of succinctness. The dialect of the Gathas is different from that of the rest of the Avesta (the name by which the whole collection is ordinarily designated for the sake of brevity), and is probably older; though some regard the difference as merely local. Both dialects are ordinarily called Zend, a name which, though inaccurate, is sanctioned by long usage. It has long been a dead language: no other monuments of it exist, since even the Persian of the cuneiform inscriptions is different. All these dialects are closely allied to the sacred language of the Hindus, Sanskrit.

The Parsees have a considerable literature besides written in the Pehlevi language, which was used by the later Persian Empire, and was displaced by Islam. These works contain a certain amount of matter which was professedly to be found in those older books which were destroyed, as well as references to current traditions in elucidation of them, to which the speculations of later ages, caused by contact with the theology of other races, have been attached. The life of Zoroaster, as the Parsees

ordinarily write it, is based on statements embodied in this literature.

The question of the historical character of Zoroaster is closely connected with another—the relation of the matter contained in the Avesta to that embodied in the sacred books of the Hindus. Is Mazdeism (as the religion of Zoroaster is often called) a development of the old Indian religion, or does it represent a conscious reform? One scholar of great eminence held that Mazdeism was a normal development of germs contained in the old Indian religion; this would leave no place for the reforming prophet. A more popular view is that the characteristic ideas and practices of Mazdeism were the work of a reforming prophet; but that much of the older religion remained, being too deep-seated in the affections of the people to be permanently displaced. Practices and cults which the reformer had endeavoured to destroy had then survived in spite of him, and, when his place as the founder of the religion had been secured, were even attributed to his initiation. This is so common an occurrence in the history of religion that there is no improbability about the assumption in this case.

This assumption suits the fact that several of the names met with in the Indian religion, though they recur in the Zoroastrian revelation, have quite different and even contrary values, and also the fact that the leading ideas of the systems are decidedly different. Supposing the Gathas to be

ancient and genuine, they give undoubted evidence of a religious struggle which would be the occasion for the introduction of the new ideas. But of the wrongs and rights of the parties engaged in it it is impossible at this period to know anything. There is no probability that any parts of the Zoroastrian revelation were committed to writing till centuries after they were composed.

3. Tower of Silence.—Just as the mummy is the most characteristic institution of Egypt, so is the tower of silence of the religion of the Parsees. The fate which most mankind shun—to be devoured by birds and wild beasts—is that which the Mazdean endeavours to secure for his corpse. The modes of dealing with the dead known to other countries—burying and burning—are regarded by him as inexpiable sins; they were both special inventions of the evil one, bent as usual on counteracting the influence of the good power. The corpse is raised on a platform, far away from human dwellings, and fixed to it; arrangements are made to drain off all rain-water that may fall on it; the three elements, fire, water, and earth, are so rendered safe from its contamination. It is remarkable that the name for these places in the native language (*dakhma*) implies that of old they were burning places.

We place this institution at the head of this sketch, because the treatment of the dead involves two theories which the religious system works out with some rigour. One of these is the horror of death—

at least in the case of human beings. The foul smell attending the putrefaction of a corpse was thought to proceed from demons who surrounded it. But, even before death had taken place, its preliminaries indicated the presence of an evil power, and therefore not only a dead man, but even a dying man, was tainting. The theory of the power of evil seems to have originated from the power of corruption in the case of the dead body, and from there to have been analysed in a variety of ways, contradictions that resulted being sometimes neglected, sometimes harmonised in some way. What was certain was that through death one who had been beneficial became a nuisance to the community; and this must be due to the presence of another person, of whom the foul smell gave evidence. It is worthy of note that in some languages the notions of good and evil originally signify sweet and foul smells.

Another principle is the sanctity of the elements. The tower of silence is a logical application of a principle not unknown elsewhere. The Mazdean disliked tainting the earth or water, just as some races feared to offend the sun by leaving a corpse exposed for him to see. The man who exhumed most corpses of men and dogs delighted the earth most. The Dakhma is really an ingenious invention for saving the elements; but even its presence was troubling to the earth, which felt sorest pain where it was. The Mazdean appears to have abandoned the attempt to save the air from pollution;

there was no way of managing that. The earth, too, had occasionally to be tainted; but the water might in many cases be saved. Travelling by water was therefore at times unlawful; and the erection of baths as well as the performance of ablutions in certain cases and at certain periods forbidden. Of all the elements, fire was that which most easily admitted of protection.

4. Clean and Unclean.—The distinction between clean and unclean, not unknown to other religions, is fundamental in Mazdeism. The notion of clean probably is the antithesis of corrupt, which, starting from dead bodies, came to include all that which the living body throws off, nail-parings, etc. To the pure kingdom then belongs life and whatever promotes it; to the impure, death, and whatever promotes it. The difficulty of the case of noxious animals occurred, and was answered; they belong to the kingdom of death, and since alive they are impure, when dead they become pure. Killing them therefore is a virtuous act.

Though this doctrine in itself has little to do with either science or morality, it gave aid to both. That water was polluted by decaying organic matter was put in the code not as a fact of physics but as a religious principle; the law laid down the quantity of water that was polluted by the presence of a corpse, and strictly forbade the drinking of such water. The doctrine that a field was tainted by having a corpse buried in it was clearly less scientific. Diseased

persons were also isolated, for fear of their tainting others. But the code did not endeavour to distinguish the infectious from the non-infectious disease, nor those ailments which were the result of age or sex from those which indicated disorder in the frame. All alike were the creation of the enemy; and their number is given as 10,000 save one. Two gods, Thrita and Airyaman, had the special task of dealing with them. The code recognises treatment with the knife and the herb, but chiefly by the spell. The last consists in a form of words which (usually taking the form of a gross insult) is calculated to frighten the demon who causes the trouble. In many cases the burning of a fire will prevent mischief.

The doctrine that cleanness was man's greatest good, uncleanness his greatest evil, led to a scrupulous sexual morality. On this matter the Avesta deserves little but praise. Respect for the principle of life also led to the humane treatment of female offenders; while the doctrine of the uncleanness of death caused barbarous treatment in some cases to be dealt to innocent persons. Like the Jewish law, that of Zoroaster held that uncleanness could be communicated to vessels and garments. Vessels of earth, wood and clay were unclean for ever and ever; but those of metal or stone could be cleansed with the aid of *gomez* (ox urine), to which wonderful powers were attributed. In this regulation we perhaps see the trace of the economical instinct which is a powerful motive in the Mazdean religion.

The selection of animals to be regarded as clean and unclean was based to some extent on the experience of farmers, to some on myths. Generally speaking, those animals that helped the farmer were the creation of Ahura-Mazda, while those that gave him trouble were the inventions of the enemy. The wolf, the snake, the gnat, the frog, the fly, all belong to the kingdom of evil. Of the creatures that belong to the kingdom of Ahura-Mazda the dog is the most important. Some portion of the code is devoted to the description of the different sorts of dogs, and to the general characteristics of the species. In some matters the dog is placed on a level with man, in others it is regarded as vastly his superior. If a dog goes mad and does mischief, it may indeed be punished for its misconduct. But in most cases killing or ill-treating a dog is regarded as a very grave offence. Giving bad food to different sorts of dogs is regarded as the same sort of offence as giving it to men of analogous rank. Of all possible crimes the killing of a water-dog appears to be the most terrible in its consequences. Besides 20,000 stripes, the offender has to kill 20,000 snakes, 20,000 frogs, 20,000 flies, 10,000 ants, 10,000 earth-worms, and to perform an endless series of services to both the gods and the community, of which "throwing twice seven bridges over canals" is not the hardest. Apparently Ahura-Mazda regards the dog as his most valuable ally on earth for the maintenance of order. No house on earth, he says, could subsist without the shepherd's

dog and the house-dog. The dog came very near receiving divine honours.

Its value for religious purposes was that it could drive the foul spirit out of a corpse; and "at the time when the life departs, when a dog is tied to his foot, even then the evil spirit rushes on it, and afterwards, when seen by the dog, the evil spirit is destroyed by it". Happily there are many kinds of dogs that can perform this duty; even a blind dog can, by putting a paw on a corpse. Before the dog has been called in, the contagion arising from a corpse is appalling; the worst is extracted by the dog's gaze, and the gaze of a bird of prey also acts as a disinfectant. Of this religious ceremony, called in the modern dialect *sag-did*, the sacred books have much to tell. Apparently it was at first a mythical dog with four eyes that was employed; the difficulty of finding such a creature led to the substitution of a commonplace beast. Yet it is difficult to get on the actual track of the series of ideas which led to this curious notion. Nations who used the dog to guard the house naturally thought of the dog as the guardian of the lower world; and frightening off thieves with dogs was of course a common occurrence. The Mazdean practice of frightening death away with one is probably suggested by this latter experience.

A later book goes rather fully into the uses of animals, explaining that each one of Ahura-Mazda's creations has the purpose of destroying some creation of the evil one. The hedgehog is created to deal

with the ant; the ichneumon is created in opposition to the venomous snake; the water-beaver is created in opposition to the demon that dwells in water. The cock co-operates with the dog in opposing demons and wizards. For further information the book refers the inquirer to a priest. It is remarkable that the distinction between clean and unclean animals is thus entirely different from that which treats them from the point of view of human food. On the question of their fitness for this purpose the same book lays down some rules that relate to the period which must elapse after an animal has eaten dead matter before it can be used for this purpose. And this, too, may be regarded as a sanitary regulation.

The rules for cleanliness in connection with certain states of the body seem to have outdone anything prescribed by any other code, and must have seriously interfered with the comfort of life. The code, like some others, makes certain concessions with the view of saving life, if possible; but by many of its provisions it must have rendered the chance of its being saved very small. We may, however, doubt how far the law was ever intended to be carried out to the letter. If this was intended, some elaborate system of outwitting it must from the first have been devised. And, indeed, in the number of stripes which it assigns constantly goes beyond all the possibilities of human endurance.

Did the code regard all but the Mazdeans as unclean? This would be the proper consequence of this

doctrine of cleanness, and probably was drawn. The existence, indeed, of strangers is ordinarily ignored; when they are spoken of, it is usually in terms of extreme reprobation. The prophet is thinking of those whose opinions he has to controvert, or with whose armies he has to fight. It is probable, therefore, that, like the Jewish code, that of the Mazdeans involved them in enmity with the whole world. The later Parsee books indeed expressly forbid eating with strangers, and give rules for the cleansing of vessels which they have used before a Parsee may use them.

The purity legislation of the Pentateuch bears some resemblance to that of the Parsees, but is only remotely connected with it, if at all. On the other hand some of the hand-washings prescribed by the Jewish tradition as opposed to the law are probably imitative of Mazdean practice. It is noteworthy that at one time, when the theory of the sanctity of water was being pressed hard, the Jewish rites were hindered by the Mazdeans.

5. The Worship of Fire is often thought of as specially characteristic of the Mazdean religion; indeed Magian and fire-worshipper are often regarded as synonymous. Theoretically it probably deserved no more worship than the other elements; but in practice it was possible to treat it with more respect. It is often called the son of the chief god, perhaps by a relic of a myth in which lightning was supposed to be a son of the sky. In the older religion it was thought of as the messenger between

earth and heaven, since the sacrificial flame carried man's gifts from earth heavenward. Some of the respect bestowed on it in the Mazdean doctrine is probably due to its being used in religious worship; for there was a tendency, not unknown in other religions, to deify everything that was employed in the worship of the gods. Some was due to the notion of the fire as representing the family centre, or point of reunion, and some besides to the instinct that connects fire with purity and cleanness. Probably the nature of the odour produced by each kind of fuel originally determined what polluted the fire. It had a "right place" on earth, *i.e.*, a home where it perpetually burned, and where it ought originally to be kindled from lightning—the theory then being that it was a guest from heaven, to which special quarters were assigned. This right place serves as a rallying place for it. When used for domestic or manufacturing purposes, it should not be extinguished, but reverently restored to its home. The code goes carefully through the cases in which it may be made useful, and assigns varying rewards to him who takes it back when it has performed its function. To ages in which the procuring of fire is of no difficulty whatever the original reason for these precautions is hidden from view. But ere the invention of the flint and steel, the retention of fire when once kindled must have been a matter of consequence to the community, capable of being construed as a religious obligation.

Where a fire has been used for that most terrible of all violations, the cremation of a corpse, the pollution was apparently to be reduced in intensity by diffusion over a number of faggots which were then to be dispersed and allowed to die out.

There are indeed passages in the Avesta where the word Fire seems to mean something more spiritual than either the fire of the hearth or that of the lightning. In one of the liturgies the different sorts of fire enumerated include (apparently) the principle of life in men, animals and plants. Its power over the demons which is often vaunted is probably physical rather than moral in origin. Fed with sweet-smelling herbs, it had the power of dispelling the evil ones. Hence high rewards were offered to those who gave it fuel of this sort. In keeping wolves and thieves away it acted somewhat as the dog acts, and, therefore, might justly be regarded as a powerful ally of Ahura-Mazda.

The later Parsees repudiate the notion that they worship fire, and even the Mohammedan poet Firdausi protested against the accusation: "Say not that they were fire worshippers; they were worshippers of the one God". In the fire to which the worshipper turns we are told to see only a symbol of the True Light and its source, or, recognising the various uses of fire, to show our thankfulness for them. It is probable that in this matter real and natural progress was made from the time of the Avesta onwards. The rules that mark the early

period are clearly intended as a sign of respect either to it or to some power immediately connected with it, whereas in almost all religions the practices which originated for one reason are retained for another. The worship of fire is probably less degrading, though no more rational, than the worship of a cat or a crocodile.

6. Dualism: Ormuzd, Ahriman.—The two powers of good and evil, or life and death, or light and darkness, are personified as two beings (sometimes supposed to have been originally twins), Ahura-Mazda (Hormizd, Ormuzd) and Angra-Mainyu (Ahriman). The name of the first seems to be a compound of an old Indo-Germanic name for a god, and the god of some other race. The history of the world is that of the war between these two powers. The relation in which they stood to each other was defined differently at different times; for the difficulty of supposing that the world was really shared between two powers escaped few who chose to think over the matter. It was probably agreed that the evil power would in the long run be worsted; and, indeed, there were men who could specify the exact date and the name of the person by whom this would be effected.

In parts of the Avesta the struggle is identified with that which the author himself is waging with the enemies of his king. The people whom he has to fight are worshippers of the Devs—a name which in the older religion belonged to the gods. The legislation has a tendency to favour exclusively the

followers of Mazda. But from the first the god of the Zoroastrian community seems to have risen above party, and have taken a higher place. He is regarded as the author of order (Asha), and is the creator of all that is for man's comfort. He is the maker of all that is known to exist. In old myths he is said to have sacrificed to one god or another in order to obtain some boon or strength; but these seem pagan reminiscences, and to be retentions of an older system rather than genuine parts of Mazdeism. Zoroaster is his instrument for communicating the law to mankind. This is done in the form of a dialogue between the prophet and the god; the prophet often asks questions to which, as a rule, a simple and direct answer is given—chiefly, indeed, in reference to the amount of punishment which various crimes shall entail, or the mode in which various forms of pollution can be cleansed. When at a later time the forms of Mohammedanism were imitated by the subject peoples the Parsees had no difficulty in identifying Ahura-Mazda with Allah, and finding in Zoroaster the analogue of Mohammed.

The evil power served as an explanation of all trouble, both moral and physical. The Vendidad, which begins by enumerating the creations of Ahura-Mazda, gives for each a counter-creation by the evil power. In this list noxious animals, evil habits, and iniquitous practices, as well as trying physical conditions, are enumerated side by side. The denotation of the word evil is well known to the

prophet, but a definition could scarcely have been given by him—except, indeed, that it proceeded from Angra-Mainyu. His two chief emissaries are the demons Aeshma and the Druj. The latter (properly the lying spirit) it is that possesses the body of one who is unclean. In one of the myths she is represented as a female, whose progeny certain crimes increase. Against her some of the most violent of the incantations are directed. There were, moreover, many more names of fiends.

Man, it would seem, has it in his power to join the forces of either of these great rivals. By joining those of the evil power he becomes evil: he pollutes while alive, and becomes clean by death. It would seem, too, that in many cases death frees the universe finally of him.

The difficulties of dualism as a philosophical system quickly make themselves manifest, and the later Parsees give explanations of the relation between the two gods which practically abandon the theory. The two powers were supposed to have made a compact, by which the evil influence was to be restrained within certain limits. For 3,000 years everything was to proceed by the will of the good power, for another 3,000 their wills were to be intermingled, and for another 3,000 the evil spirit was to be finally enfeebled. The doctrine of dualism was thus modified, on the one hand, so as to give the good power an advantage, eventually leading to the ousting of the other. On the other hand, the mode in which

this is described clearly leads to the supposition that the two are subject to a third.

7. Vestiges of Polytheism.—The religion on which Mazdeism was founded was in no sense monotheistic, and of the deities whom it recognised a few still retained some place in the new religion. The old name for god (Dev), however, fell into disrepute, and in the Mazdean system serves to denote the powers of evil. For "god" a new word meaning "object of worship" (Yazata) was invented; and of beings who might claim that name the new religion left room for a large number. Immediately attached to the chief god were a number of hypostases, called Amesha-Spends (*i.e.*, Holy Immortals) — "Good Thought, Excellent Holiness, Supreme Sovereignty, Holy Piety, Health, Immortality". That these in origin were abstractions is clear from their names; several seem attributes of the supreme deity; but in religious metaphysics there are some obvious arguments which make it necessary to abstract the attributes from the Creator, and in the personification of these we can only see evidence of the monotheism of the Mazdean system. When once abstracted from the Creator, they had come to be recognised as independent beings; functions were found for them; they were thought to preside over different portions of the realm of nature—to be as it were satraps of the chief god. Several other abstractions figure in the books of ritual in the character of deities; and, indeed, there is a decided tendency to offer worship to everything

that figures in the religious rites. The Yazatas that have been named had assigned to them, with others, one each of the thirty days of the month. There are forms addressed to them in this capacity, and also a whole series of hymns called Yashts, dedicated to deities of whom the poets speak in extravagant language. These cannot in all cases be regarded as abstractions.

The longest series is that dedicated to the god Mithra, also known to the Indians as Mitra, and a popular god in parts of the Eranian East (the familiar name Mithradates means "given by Mithra"). Ahura-Mazda is there said to have ordained the sacrifice to him, and even to have sacrificed to him himself. "Lying unto Mithra" is represented as an offence of the first magnitude. He seems to be identified with the notion of good faith. Some of the language used of him is similar to that applied to the sun, with whom indeed he came to be identified. He is eminently a god of battle, of horses and of wide pastures. He is asked for the ordinary gifts—riches, strength, victory, good conscience, bliss, good fame and knowledge. He is said to have a thousand ears and ten thousand eyes; on the side of his chariot are a thousand bows, a thousand swords, a thousand maces of iron.

A Yasht is also devoted to another god of consequence, sometimes reckoned with the Amesha-Spends, Sraosha, or divine obedience. In the Gathas he is described as leading to Ahura-Mazda's throne, as

holding colloquy with Zoroaster, and leading him. In the hymns in his honour he is described as sleepless, watching over the whole creation of Ahura-Mazda, rendering it possible for the Amesha-Spends to discharge their duties. He first sacrificed, first chanted the Gathas, first worshipped Ahura-Mazda. When the sacrifice is offered to him he smites down fiends and falls on their worshippers. Like several other of these abstractions, we seem to see in the case of Sraosha a philosophical description of cause and effect materially interpreted—perhaps for the benefit of the vulgar at the first. That obedience to the divine will might be regarded as the best weapon for the overcoming of fiends is obvious—somewhat as we read that the "Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God". The theory that Sraosha was a person to whom sacrifice might be offered, and who had a real sword, was, therefore, a crass literalisation of what originally can only have been intended to be a metaphor.

The Avestic religion as we have it is not altogether free from foreign introductions. A goddess Anahita, much worshipped in Armenia, has a series of hymns dedicated to her. She is identified with the goddess of the waters, and myths told of her that correspond with such a being; but her worship appears to have been attended with rites that by no means corresponded with the high moral standard of the Avesta. In her case, too, it is probable that there were images, the absence of which in the case of the other deities seems greatly to have helped to keep the

religion pure and spiritual. The later Parsee books praise several kings for having extirpated idolatry; and Zoroaster's campaign (perhaps in imitation of that of Mohammed) is said to have been directed against the worship of idols.

Star worship is represented by the hymns to Tistriya, or Sirius, the leader of the stars against the planets. Rain is attributed to him, and the myth represents him as fighting with the demon of drought. The appearance of the star is said to vary from that of a man in the prime of life to that of a bull, and again to that of a horse with golden ears and a golden caparison. "He makes the sea boil up and down: he makes it stream this way and that." Worship of the moon was also not unknown.

The praise of these beings has been thought consistent with monotheism by many who have studied Mazdeism impartially. Many forms of monotheistic belief recognise beings who are intermediate in rank between god and man. Where these beings are mentioned, whether in early passages or late, it is often difficult to distinguish the language of metaphor from that which is to be taken literally. They are regularly named in some sort of connection with Ahura-Mazda, who, even where he is himself said to have obtained help from them, is acknowledged to be their creator. The tendency of the later developments of Mazdeism would, moreover, appear to have been towards making them fainter rather than defining their outlines.

Other deities, or semi-deities, who exist as a company are the Fravashis—secondary personages—like the Roman "genius" or the Egyptian "Ka". The Fravashis of the faithful, *i.e.*, of the Mazdeists, receive honour in a lengthy Yasht. Not only the good, however, have them; the chief god, the Amesha-Spends, Zarathustra, the sky, the earth, every thing or person that can be thought of has a Fravashi. The same extraordinary powers are attributed to them in their praises as are attributed to the gods in theirs. Ahura-Mazda required and requires their assistance. The sun, moon and stars owe it to their favour that they have room to move. In the praise assigned to them we may see a trace of the ancestor worship which appears in the earlier religion.

This ancestor worship is one of the matters in which the Jews were influenced by Persian practice. Cakes given to the dead are mentioned in the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, whereas in the canonical books there is no allusion to them. In the Parsee religion it is declared necessary to maintain the souls of fathers, mothers and relatives properly. On the monthly and annual commemorations of their deaths a sacred feast and the consecration of sacred cakes has to be observed. On those days they are supposed to bring with them 10,000 spirits save one, who, in the event of the feast being provided, bless the house, whereas in the event of its being neglected they complain thereof before the

supreme power. The idea that the dead required clothing is also suggested by clothing being put on some of the sacred cakes. These notions are probably of much earlier date than the general philosophy of the Avesta.

Corresponding with the gods there was a whole series of demons, male and female, whom it was the object of Zoroastrianism to expel or outwit. Of some of these only the fame remained, as it were, in history. Azi Dahaka, three-headed, three-mouthed, six-eyed, with a thousand senses, the strongest fiend that Angra-Mainyu created against the material world, had been defeated in primeval times. The defeat of this monster was a fragment of ancient history which recounted how he had vainly endeavoured by sacrifice to obtain powers from gods who would only give them to the devotees of the good power. In process of time he became a historical character (in accordance with the euhemeristic explanation), and even the city where he dwelt could be named. But the demons into contact with whom the Parsee was constantly brought were in packs; nor does their theory that a variety of acts gave the demon an opportunity to enter the human citadel differ much from that found in Indian romances. A considerable number of names can be collected from the Parsee sacred books, used to designate different varieties of the demon species, only differentiated by the nature of the vice which gave them access, or the evil which they caused. In the passages of the Avesta which

speak of them the difficulty of distinguishing between fact and allegory is particularly great; in the spells which enumerate demons and then explain that these demons mean sickness, death, pain, fever, disease, rottenness, infection, etc., the amount of personality which each worshipper attached to the fiends would have varied very considerably with each person who used the form of words. Some persons made them all names for a single devil; but others would attribute to the devil a separate messenger for each form of mischief. Of the Zoroastrian fiends Aeshma deva, or Asmodeus, is familiar from the story of Tobit. Whereas, however, in Tobit he appears to be a demon of lust, in the Parsee books he is called a demon of wrath. It is the business of Sraosha to keep him under restraint. The authors of these books could specify many such pairs, in which a subordinate of Ahura-Mazda was coupled with a demon whom he had to check.

The Jews seem to have ascribed their knowledge of angels with names to the influence of the Persians. This view was probably correct. To the question, who were the ministers of the chief God, the Parsees had a ready answer; the Jews at many periods of their religious history have been compelled to find something of their own that would match what other people had. But the names which they gave their intermediates were not, like the Parsee names, abstractions—whence this explanation only partially covers the facts.

8. Religious Operations are for the purpose of propitiating the gods and obtaining their help. Of the instruments employed for this purpose the most important is haoma, the Zend form of the Sanskrit homa, a plant with intoxicating juice, which was extracted by pounding in a mortar, of which we often hear. It was drunk by the worshippers. The result was a sort of inspiration: "There, Haoma, on the ranges, dost thou grow of many kinds; now thou growest of milky whiteness, and now golden; and forth thine healing liquors flow for the inspiring of the pious". According to the later books, the juice is to be given to infants immediately after birth in order that understanding and knowledge may come to them. Its taste will also enable the dead to live again. Perhaps the tasting of the haoma was in time confined to the officiating priest during the sacrifice. Perhaps it was originally a totem plant; it is deified in the Avesta, together with other sacrificial objects, and only to the same extent as they; less personality is ascribed to it than in the Indian religion. Among many races intoxication has had religious value, the effects being attributed to the intervention of a divine power. Persian sects still preserve this doctrine. In the Avestic hymns, however, the value of the haoma seems to be dissociated from the effect which it at one time produced.

Another object of vast importance is the baresma or barsom, a bundle of twigs held in the hand during religious performances. The worshipper is supposed

to keep his eyes fixed on it all the time. Brass wire is now substituted for the twigs originally used, which receive divine honours in the Avestic hymns. In old forms of magic a bundle of twigs is often used for the purpose of sprinkling water, and so producing rain; the practice is an example of sympathetic magic, in which the gods are shown by a sign what is wanted of them. In the Avestic religion it has long been dissociated from the idea of the production of rain, and figures as a sacred object simply. It is, however, often named in connection with the holy water (zaothra) which served for libation.

Fresh meat (called myazda) was offered on cakes. The hymns tell us plainly that the purpose of these offerings was to provide the gods with strength to perform the functions of overcoming evil which belonged to them. The practice by which these cakes, etc., were consumed by the worshippers instead of the gods involves an improvement on the older conception.

More important than all these was the spell or prayer. A chant called Ahuna-vairya has tremendous power ascribed to it. The chief god won his first victory over the evil one by chanting it. When Zoroaster is attacked by the same power he overcomes the fiend by the same instrument, which is called as strong a weapon as a stone the size of a house.

Other objects of prime importance were the sacred clothing, a girdle and a shirt, to be worn by every Parsee from the fifteenth year. The omission of

these is thought to give great power to the evil one; indeed, whereas other acts that give power to the enemy can be counteracted, this act of omission cannot be. Hence it is coupled with very grave offences. A special demon is supposed to suggest the neglect of the thread-girdle, or the opinion that it is not required.

Religious operations were performed by priests, whom the sacred books treat as one of three, or afterwards four, castes. It is likely that they all belonged to one tribe, and indeed to a Median tribe, whose religion spread in Persia. Members of the priestly families might relinquish their caste, but those of other families could not aspire to be priests. Their duty was to offer the sacrifice, and the different parts of the operation were minutely divided between them. Five different priests performed the initial ceremonies; two others chanted and performed the solemn function. There was a further division into priests superior, intermediate, and inferior in the estimation of the righteous. The five dispositions attributed to them are "innocence, discreetness, respect for the office, correct repetition and intonation, and steadfastness". The later books evidently contemplate some sort of self-government by the priestly order, and an arrangement by which provincial centres of worship should be regularly supplied from headquarters. The substance of the sacred books was further to be communicated orally by the priests to their disciples, whence we get no division

between priests and Rabbis such as changed the face of the later Judaism.

Of the arrangements for public worship we learn chiefly from the late books, which describe a number of festivals ; six yearly ones formed an invention which gave the evil power most vexation. These are thought to represent an original division of the year into six seasons, whereas at a later time they were, through sacerdotal speculation, connected with the creation of different parts of the universe. Later calendars find reasons for them dating from more recent history.

For private individuals the priest had to perform the ceremony of purification, which, in the case of one who had actually touched a corpse, was so serious and complicated as to require very special knowledge and practice. Owing, moreover, to its cleansing power it was often undergone by those who had not incurred this form of defilement. It involves a number of theories which can be illustrated from folk-lore. One of these is that of the magic circle. Furrows are dug in the ground, and holes to contain water and gomez. By the aid of these the area is limited in which the cause of the uncleanness, the evil spirit, can move. By a lengthy process of sprinkling he is driven from the head of the unclean person down to his heels, from which he finally emerges in the shape of a fly. Being unable to cross the magical furrows, he is compelled to fly away. The sprinkling, which is performed

with a lengthy rod, is accompanied by the recitation of powerful spells. The unclean man after the ceremony washes his body many times with dust and water, and has even then to wait nine days in the hospital or place of infirmity before he can join the rest of the community. Even so he has to pay a high fee for being cleansed, and one that will satisfy the priest who has cleansed him ; for if the priest goes away unsatisfied the cleansing is thereby annulled. A terrible punishment is threatened to one who undertakes to perform this ceremony (called bareshnum) without being properly qualified.

After a death in a household some sort of purification is required for all the relations—a relic perhaps of the early doctrine which identifies a man with his flesh and blood. The fact of the death god having obtained dominion over any member of the group causes the whole to fall under his influence. The amount of uncleanness varies directly with the nearness of the member to the dead person ; the nearer they are the longer must they keep away from the others. Their re-entering society was accompanied by the cleansing of the house where the death took place. They had to wash their bodies and their clothes three times, chant the Gathas three times, and offer some ordinary sacrifices. After this they and the house counted as clean.

9. Theory of a Future State.—The future state is of less importance to the Parsee than to the Hindu or Egyptian, but still he knows something about it—

sufficient to enable the legislator to promise and to warn. Both in the Avesta and in the Yashts Zoroaster makes inquiries about this matter and receives rather full replies, which are not indeed quite consistent. It seems clear that the Persians thought of the soul departing from the body at death much as we think of it. For three nights it abides in the neighbourhood of the body, near the head, enjoying (in the case of the faithful) as much pleasure as the whole world can taste, in the case of the wicked suffering as much pain as the whole living world can suffer. At the end of the third night the former inhales a fragrant wind, the latter a pestilential one. The souls of both proceed to the Chinvat Bridge, with demons howling after the soul of the wicked. This bridge is kept by dogs, which help the soul of the faithful over, whereas they keep the unjust off. The bridge which, like the Mohammedan Sirat, was probably thought of as a thin line, according to some widens itself out for the benefit of the just. The just are there met by their conscience—"advancing to him in the shape of a maiden fair, bright, white-armed, strong, tall-formed, high-standing, beautiful of body, as fair as the fairest things in the world". Three steps then take him into Paradises, called respectively Good Thought, Good Word and Good Deed, after which he enters the endless lights. A similar process brings the wicked to endless darkness. Food in the one case delicious, in the other nauseous, is then brought to him. Occasionally in

the law book the torments of the latter place are held out as a threat to one who violates the law; one who wastes clothing by throwing it on a dead body is promised them; and a false oath, apparently, is to be punished with a hell more painful than impaling or vivisection. Other offences can be expiated in this world, after which the soul may proceed with safety; but sometimes offences will be atoned for there as well as here.

It seems clear that the after-world, though recognised, does not enter very seriously into the calculations of the Mazdeist. He has, indeed, so much to think of in the way of acquiring wealth in this world that the thought of the other is not likely to trouble him very seriously. Still, in some of the compositions ascribed to Zoroaster himself by some modern authorities there is a distinction between the two worlds, and a prayer for the gifts desirable for both. The chief god himself is said to be dwelling in the farther world. It is probable that, as with many nations, the idea of another life took a very different place in the imagination in accordance with the mental state of different individuals. Of this we may be tolerably sure, that the Persians had no conception of it elaborated to the extent of the Egyptian doctrine, or to that of the Indian. The consequence assigned to the treatment of the body, which apparently had no bearing on the fate of the soul that once possessed it, shows that the doctrine of a future life is not essentially connected with Mazdeism. The body clearly

is done with when at death the evil power has taken possession of it. That possession, it is to be observed, lasts a year only; at the end of that time its power of causing pollution is exhausted. The difference between the faithful and the unfaithful is apparent in the fate of their bodies: logically the bodies of the unfaithful ought by death to become pure. The statement that the soul abides in the neighbourhood of the body after death should also have given rise to speculation.

10. Cosmogony.—Of the origin of things the older Mazdean books give only fragmentary notions, probably because the books that were devoted to this subject are lost. We are told something of Ahura-Mazda creating a variety of lands, and of the birth of mountains, of which a great number are mentioned, also of the formation of lakes and rivers and of a mythical sea as well as the real Caspian. The older books contain also a certain amount of mythical history: Zoroaster, it appears, had predecessors who fought the demon with fair success. Of one primeval hero, Yima, the Avesta has much to say. In some ways he takes the place of first man. Ahura-Mazda offered to make him prophet, but he refused to convey the revelation to mankind. According to another story he was tempted and fell. Nevertheless he it was who by a series of strides enlarged the earth each time it became too small for its inhabitants. He also acted a part similar in some ways to that of Noah. Under the direction of Ahura-Mazda

he provided a place where the seeds of life might be stored against the winter which would at one time befall the earth. In that place the seeds were to remain safe and to await a new creation. This doctrine of the consumption of the world by winter was not retained by the popular consciousness; whence the storage-house of Yima ceased to have any obvious meaning, and was confused with Paradise. It is unnecessary to copy from the Yashts the list of gods and demi-gods whose exploits they recount; the stories told have little detail, and are repetitions of the same matter with changes of the names. There was clearly a tendency to make Zoroaster the founder of the new system, effacing all that went before it. His three sons are the originators of the three castes, warriors, priests, and husbandmen. For many purposes he counts as the first man.

The later books record much more elaborate inventions concerning the origin of the world and of civilisation. Here several different theories are harmonised. According to one Gayomard was the first man. According to another the race began by a couple, Mashya and Mashyot, "man and woman". A legend had to be invented to explain the origin of the couple from the one. They began by ascribing the creation of all around them to the good spirit, but afterwards ascribed it to the demons; this act constituted a kind of fall. The invention of the most necessary arts, the discovery of fire and iron, and the practice of sacrifice are ascribed to this primeval

pair, as also the commencement of war. The origin of all known races from their descendants is then traced by the narrator. An original ox is according to the same work the origin of all animals; and to the same creature the origin of most forms of vegetation is attributed. "From the horns arose peas, from the nose the leek, from the blood the grapevine, from the lungs the rue-like herb," etc. An attempt was made at one time to divide the different species between different spirits.

One of the lost books entered into some metaphysical details, now apparently unknown. The question, which was first, soul or body, was, however, posed, and it was replied that the soul was earlier; and it is clear that in general spiritual existence was thought to have preceded material existence, and that expedients, mythical or philosophical, were suggested to account for the production of the one from the other. The doctrine of antagonism of two forces admitted of the working into the system of old myths of divine wars; and in the account of the battles fought between Ahura-Mazda and his enemy we have many details that clearly belong to the physical phenomena of storm, drought, earthquake, mildew, and other disasters that may well be ascribed to the power of evil. While the descriptions are not unlike those of Æschylus and Milton, the origin of the stories in the Parsee books is much more evident.

11. Spirit of Mazdeism.—The general spirit of

the Mazdean system is that of an agricultural and superstitious people. Agriculture is strongly recommended. In answer to the question where the earth feels most happy, Ahura-Mazda names five places ; and these are places where there is most increase in flocks and herds. He who sows corn sows holiness ; unhappy is the land that has long lain unsown with the seed of the sower. Sowing corn again and again is the act that fulfils the law of Mazda. The growth of corn produces extreme annoyance to the Devas ; it is as though red-hot iron were turned about in their throats. Several of the enactments of the Avesta clearly proceed from the economy which is associated with this calling. Men are advised not to waste a thread if they can help it ; where garments have been polluted by contact with the dead, the law endeavours to limit the necessary waste as much as possible. To some extent the destruction of noxious creatures which is so strongly recommended is only part of the natural work of the business-like farmer. It is in accordance with this agricultural spirit that the code by no means encourages asceticism. "Of two men, he who fills himself with meat is filled with the good spirit much more than he that does not"—on the ground that a man who has not eaten is not able to till the soil. Similarly a man who has children is far above a childless man ; and one who has riches is far above him who has none.

This rather commonplace and conventional view

of the world and of men's aims is maintained in the Avestic morality. An attempt is made to classify contracts, and penalties assigned for the breach of them. It is extraordinary that comparatively small penalties are assigned to murder, manslaughter and malicious wounding; murdering a man is a very mild offence as compared with slaying a dog. Adultery, too, appears to be viewed with astounding leniency. Hence the Avestic morality cannot be admired either on the ground of what it actually enjoins, or on the ground of rigid adherence to a principle. Certain virtues, such as truthfulness, justice and charity are repeatedly recommended; and they are sanctioned by promises of abundant wealth. Reverence for Ashi Vanguhi, the goddess of piety, will bring men all sorts of "good things"; of these an elaborate list is given, somewhat in the style of a Mohammedan Paradise: "The men whom thou dost attend have hoards of silver and gold brought from far distant regions, and garments of splendid make".

The prophet, therefore, probably confirmed existing notions on these subjects, rather than introduced a serious reform. And in the distinction between the ranks of good and evil probably existing superstitions were to a great extent organised and stereotyped. The demons are more familiarly known by the Persian than by the Indian; and the doctrine of uncleanness has enabled the former to localise them better, and know when and where they are to be met with. Since the purpose of religion was largely to help man

to overcome their influence, the Mazdean religion became very ordinarily associated by the ancients with the idea of magic, which derives its name from the Mazdean priests. The vicissitudes of the agricultural calling bring man into constant contact with forces that upset his calculations; and the theory that ill-success was due to the operations of malignant powers was doubtless earlier than the organiser of the Mazdean system, to whose doctrine the existence of this superstition lent plausibility. The code recognised the existence of some whose names were already familiar, while it introduced (probably) some new names, or at any rate some new assignment of functions.

It is interesting to learn from the formularies of the Mazdeans what in their opinion constituted the chief features of their belief. One that repeatedly occurs is that of good thought, good speech and good deed. We should be mistaken in translating the word "good" in this form as morally good; their catechism explains the trio as referring to the repetition of sacred texts and ritual strictness, perhaps based on piety. The worship of Ahura-Mazda and of Zoroaster's order and the abjuring of the Devas, the recognition of four castes (in earlier times there were only three) and of five chiefs in the political world—these also seem vital matters. Finally, the religion of Zoroaster is also called the faith of kindred marriage, showing what importance was assigned in the code to that practice.

Modern writers who have endeavoured to estimate the spirit of Mazdeism lay stress on the honour paid to parents, on the commendations of justice often to be found in Mazdean books, and on the sexual purity which is a very striking characteristic of its teaching. On the other hand, they find fault with it for exclusiveness, for its tending to perpetuate infantile superstitions connected with demons, and a variety of vexing restrictions which experience and science have shown to be valueless. In regarding the campaign of Islam against Mazdeism as unjustifiable on the ground of religious or moral superiority, we can only agree with the learned translator of the Parsee books. It would seem, however, that by fierce persecution of Jews and Christians the Persians had set an example of intolerance which is invariably fatal to those who start it.

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